

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/8138758) at
<http://download.archiveofourown.org/works/8138758>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence , Rape/Non-Con , Major Character Death
Category:	F/F , Gen , M/M , Other
Fandom:	Overwatch (Video Game)
Relationship:	Fareeha "Pharah" Amari/Angela "Mercy" Ziegler , Hana "D.Va" Song/Satya "Symmetra" Vaswani , Minor or Background Relationship(s)
Character:	Hana "D.Va" Song , Angela "Mercy" Ziegler , Fareeha "Pharah" Amari , Jack Morrison , Lúcio Correia dos Santos , Reinhardt Wilhelm , Torbjörn Lindholm , Tekhartha Zenyatta , Genji Shimada , Hanzo Shimada , Jesse McCree , Bastion (Overwatch) , Winston (Overwatch) , Aleksandra "Zarya" Zaryanova , Satya "Symmetra" Vaswani , Mei-Ling Zhou , Lena "Tracer" Oxtan , Widowmaker Amélie Lacroix , Reaper Gabriel Reyes , Ana Amari
Additional Tags:	Heavy Angst , Slow Burn , Blood and Injury , Everything is Beautiful and Everything Hurts , This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things , Implied/Referenced Suicide , Panic Attacks , Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD , Angst with a Happy Ending , Suicidal Thoughts , Past Child Abuse
Series:	Part 1 of there's blood in the water
Stats:	Published: 2016-09-25 Completed: 2017-01-07 Chapters: 22/22 Words: 85103

the young never sleep

by [cerealmilk](#)

Summary

When she was drafted into Overwatch, Hana had expected bloodshed. She was used to it. She'd witnessed the destruction of the Korean Omnic crisis first-hand. Compared to that, this was nothing.

She hadn't expected joining Overwatch to dredge up old memories. Soon enough, it became a daily battle not to fall apart in front of the others. She had an image to keep up, after all.

But when an incident in Iceland causes her true colors to shine through her D.Va persona, bygone demons begin to resurface around every corner, and it's up to Hana to settle things before the shadows of her past tear Overwatch apart for good.

a house far from home

Chapter Notes

I've had this written for four months and only now do I post it, among like 10 other D.Va character studies, but I wanted to try my hand at it. D.Va intrigues me greatly.

I hope you enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

She was D.Va.

She was an idol, a soldier, a beacon.

She was the kind of person that was easy to like, but just as easy to hate.

She was a lot of things, but she was most certainly not a child.

Clearly, they *insisted* on calling her such.

It irked Hana to no end when they used the damned title. Jack, Angela, Reinhardt, Torbjörn, Zenyatta, Aleksandra, Fareeha, Jesse, Hanzo, Winston... they'd all done it. Rather, they *still* did it, somehow incessantly. To spite her or out of honest mistake, she didn't know, nor did she care. All she knew was that when they used it, it was frustrating, and that frustration molded into a deep-set bitterness the more and more often the title came up. This bitterness was a lot deeper than it seemed— an outward, mild annoyance, and she did nothing to tame it. She had been fighting alongside Overwatch for three months, after all. Things should have changed by then, but they hadn't.

And it wasn't solely her teammates that called her a child anymore.

"This is no place for children," Widowmaker had jeered, once on an escort mission in Toulouse.

Hana had puffed up her chest indignantly, spinning around to pinpoint the sniper's location.

"Who are *you* calling a child?"

"Kid," Soldier: 76 had barked, "fall back. I'll handle her."

Inwardly, she had died a little, because it was hopeless. There was no way they would ever see her as anything more than a child that needed to be monitored at all times. Someone who couldn't cover their backsides in a pinch. Someone who couldn't be trusted to get the job done.

And she learned to hate it. She had never hated anything so intensely before, nor had ever she thought that she would ever need to, but here she was: stuck in some strange, hellish place between limbo and an old, old memory, back in training at Busan. She learned quickly that this would be less of a safe haven than she had thought, when her services were asked for, bright-eyed and raw. She learned quickly that this world, this separate reality she had naively thrown herself into, would attack her from every angle, everywhere and anytime it could.

"Can I get you a snack?"

"Do you want me to fix your mech?"

"Here, I'll do your laundry for you."

"Go back to the ship— we'll take it from here."

It was almost laughable, if not for how sour it all made her tongue taste when they looked down on her like that. Oh, and Hana was bitter, so bitter to them, but she told herself that they deserved it and carried on with her acrimonious ways: clinical smiles, too-tight of handshakes, staying up until the ass-crack of dawn with a mug of cold coffee in one hand and a mission report in the other, dark circles hanging under her eyes.

Everyone thought she was gaming when she retired for the night. It was easy to let them think that, easier than having to explain the intense research she did on previous operations in an attempt to gain their respect. She stayed up late, later, and then well into the earliest hours of the morning, sleeping on a schedule of approximately five hours every two and a half days. Doing the math helped keep her more awake while she studied.

Hana read about the old Overwatch, and dug eagerly into the Blackwatch files, learning all she could about Gabriel Reyes and Ana Amari and Gérard Lacroix and the others that had built the foundation of the Overwatch she had been cast into. She read about the Geneva disaster and the theft of Watchpoint: Grand Mesa and the beginning and end of the Deadlock Gang. She read about the Horizon Project, about the origins of the chronal accelerator, and she was just beginning to skim through the far and few documents they had on a Talon asset codenamed Sombra. She researched old access codes, the nifty secrets of Watchpoints Overwatch was looking into reinstating, like Grand Mesa and Punta Arenas. The hours of sleep she missed upon reading took a toll on her, but that was what makeup was for.

When was the last time she had slept properly? She couldn't even remember. The only things that kept her going most days were numerous green drinks pumped full of sugar and caffeine and crinkling bags of junk food that emptied far too quickly. She couldn't be bothered to get up for proper meals most of the time. Her life was too rushed— missions, streaming, reading. In her free time, she would head down to the training center to clear her mind and maybe show off a little. It was easier to lose herself in rhythms and physical activity. She didn't have to think much, and her brain was notorious for consuming her at times.

She would punch things for hours when training, kick things, too— she had been trained in various forms of martial arts, and her supposedly-weak melee was, in fact, a vicious barrage of fist, bone, and body. Nobody had expected her to be such a powerful physical fighter for someone whose preferred form of combat was piloting a giant, bulletproof mech with skills derived from video games, but she got the feeling that she was new territory in every shape and form to them. They weren't from her generation. They didn't stem from the fresh breed of soldiers— better, safer, but more broken from their youth.

No one wanted to spar with her. It was not out of fear, nor out of ignorance. She learned quickly that they were afraid of breaking her, and of injuring her. Once upon a time, Fareeha had clumsily tried to explain why she persistently refused Hana's offers to spar when no one else was around, but she had lost the younger girl's attention as soon as she declined. If they didn't want to fight her, they were of no use. But, she sometimes argued with herself, why would they not spar with her? Wouldn't it be practice if they ever had to encounter younger, fresher soldiers on the enemy team?

It made no sense. Nothing made sense. Overwatch was a mess, despite the time it had had to get itself back together.

Sometimes, in the mornings or during her personal training sessions, Hana would run. She would run for miles— around the track, on the treadmill, around the parameters of the base, until her lungs heaved, her face dripped with sweat, and she could barely stand anymore. Exhaustion was a better excuse to retire for the night early to get some reading in, she supposed. Occasionally, Lena or Angela would join her on her runs and try to make conversation, but she was only ever angry or laconic when she ran, so those conversations were always short-lived.

Hana would also take frequent trips to the shooting range— Jack encouraged it. He said it was good to keep her wits about her, to keep her edges sharp. Hana, personally, hated it— her pistol never felt right in her hands, like it had never belonged there in the first place. Her hands were far better fit for a controller, though she never complained— not once. Her mien was masterful in craft. It served its purpose of masking her discomfort. The others didn't seem to notice how constantly she shifted her grip on her pistol's hilt, how she didn't call to it affectionately like Lena, Jesse, and Aleksandra were so prone to doing.

And she was jealous. Jesse spoke of his gun like it was his own child. Whenever Hana thought of hers, she felt compelled to throw it into the nearest body of water and never look upon its metallic sheen again. She never did get rid of it, of course, because she tended to rely on her gun more often than not when her mech got caught in a pinch. Hence, why she trained so diligently, despite the grudge she had long held against it.

Every time she had a break, she would head down to that training center. Typically, it was her turning the lights off, because the only person who had ever stayed in the training center later than her was Aleksandra, both of them prone to disregarding the nighttime curfew rule.

Winston had insisted on scheduled bedtimes, and when he brought it up she told him something along the lines of 'fuck the schedule' and did what she wanted because she was a bullet and the others weren't entirely bulletproof, not to her. It was painstakingly obvious that they were unaccustomed to and unprepared for such stubbornness from her. The situation was almost funny — they had dealt with the earliest days and youngest ages of Jesse McCree, Genji Shimada, and Lena Oxton, and yet they were *embarrassingly* unprepared for D.Va. Even if D.Va didn't act so much like a child, even if D.Va was articulate and composed and restrained and a little bit proud with a hint of exuberance, and she didn't know what to do with herself anymore. Hana had always prided herself for her ability to control situations without changing, but here, now, she wasn't sure whether pride or desperation would come out on top.

This confusion didn't make her any less an adult, but, despite all her mature tones and clipped actions, despite her verbal dissent and visible displeasure at the name, they still called her a child.

'*Child, child, child,*' they said. And she would sneer and bite her tongue and find an excuse to leave the room before the acrid words could find a way past her bright, cocksure veneer.

What of others, the ones that didn't call her a child?

The others weren't much better. In fact, they were worse. Worse in the way of casting her those silent, pitying glances when she got injured in the slightest, as if she were eight in their eyes and not nineteen, wincing prematurely whenever she opened her mouth as if they expected her to scream or throw a tantrum. They treated her like porcelain, even though she had trained for years in hand to hand combat and could outshoot most of them with her gun, and it was *hell*.

Down went the artificial targets, quicker passed the miles, harder fell the punches, and still came the apprehensive glances. No matter what she did, no matter how she morphed herself or tried to make herself more flexible. Nothing changed.

It stung her pride, it ate at her self-esteem, and it never ceased to confuse her. Hadn't Jesse and Angela been younger than her when they joined? Who gave them the right to be so hypocritical? She wasn't the youngest to ever join, so why were they treating her like the thinnest pane of glass? Was she not skilled enough? Was that it? Was she not good enough for them?

Anger and hopelessness were the ripe fruits of her still-growing tree. *Why do I do this?* she asked herself, sometimes— bitter words said to the mirror bearing a face with an equally resentful expression. *It never makes a difference. I should give up. I should pack up my shit and disappear. Nobody would mind. I'm only a burden, anyways, right?*

But she never gave up, because quitting was losing and she would not break first if it killed her. She was D.Va, after all.

Hana knew the others considered her too young to be fighting, she *knew*. She *understood*, or at least she tried to. She was younger than them, and had not seen as much of the suffering of the world as they had. Or had she? She'd seen her fair share of death, had taken her fair share of lives. What she had seen was just another uncertainty compared to their accomplishments, she supposed. Everything was uncertain. Her footing was unsteady in this new territory. Too many things she didn't understand and not enough context for comprehension.

For example, their reasoning, which she had yet to find. Of course there were reasons. There had to be. Maybe not good ones, but they were there. They were reasons all the same— and she *got it*, she understood that they didn't want her here, but that didn't make it any less *galling*, heaven forbid.

The elder members of Overwatch refused to treat her with respect, to treat her as an equal and not as a burden, even when she had given them *considerable* evidence proving otherwise, but what could she do?

Should she stomp her foot, she would only be proving them right. Should she fight her way through it, she would only be digging her own grave. Should she leave, she would be letting down an entire country of people who believed in her. Should she deal with it calmly, it would be uncharacteristic, and therefore unacceptable. Because she was D.Va to them and D.Va was the kind of person that complained and rebuked about being called a child but never actually *did* anything about it, because she had been conditioned to take everything that was given and give back only what everyone else wanted.

And, regrettably, they wanted her to be a child in a suit too big, with unquestionable fame and a rebuttal to everything. They wanted her to be bright and peppy and snarky, but also obedient. Not the commander was, but the subordinate she was never meant to be. They wanted her to be *more*. If she had already been pushed to her limits before, then she was certainly straining the boundaries of her existence now. She was a rubber band, and they were pulling her back further and further and she knew that eventually she would snap. Eventually, everything she'd created would come crashing down around her and she wouldn't be able to stop it. D.Va could only go to so many lengths. Hana could only tear herself into so many pieces.

But, for Overwatch, she would not break. They didn't deserve the satisfaction. So, what could she do? What could she do in retaliation to the uncertainty and the strain?

Cuttingly, sardonically, *regrettably*, and almost in an ironic sense, she turned herself into everything they wanted, sans the child that they so desperately tried to make her, and sans the charisma that was so commonly found in D.Va. There was no gratitude in their exchanges, no

respect from either party. It was corrosive and acidic in every aspect; this passive aggression was the key to her survival, and likely the only reason she had not yet been dismissed.

Hana closed herself off from them, and made sure that they knew that that was *exactly* what she was doing. She misplaced their belongings on purpose, neglected to tell them important mission details, and so on and so forth. It was remarkably petty, even for her— but she was D.Va and it was the most D.Va-esque thing she could do.

She only spoke to her teammates when she had to. If there was an opportunity to avoid contact with them, she took it. And she could see the hurt confusion in their eyes when she hastily removed herself from their presence, and she reveled in it.

But it hurt. Oh, it hurt, because they were persistent.

She tried to convince herself that they had brought this on themselves. She tried, she really did.

Her life was a cycle. Missions, streams, reports, training. She hated it.

Streaming was hell, but she had to do it. She had to get up each morning knowing that the face she was born with wasn't good enough, knowing that she had to doll herself up and hide her body because she had to be what everyone else wanted. She was never asked for consent, or asked for her opinion. She was simply told 'do this and don't question why' and that was that. She had condemned herself to this— there was no escape from stardom. The chains were too long and too heavy to break, wrapped around her throat, around her mind.

Of course, she did it, but only because their metaphorical swords were pointed at her throat.

Her fans were given a voice pitched annoyingly high, with cheesy, quirky one-liners that she hated to say but she had to because no one else would. She was being paid, she was being sponsored, and she was being fed the lines by all the politicians and adults that sought to hold her and pilot her by her strings.

The missions were hell to complete, too, but she had to complete them. She had to get up each morning knowing that if she faltered in the slightest she was done for, that she had to sharpen her teeth and build her walls taller every day because she had to be what everyone else wanted. She was never asked for help, nor was she asked to do menial tasks. She was simply told 'let us handle this' and that was that. She had condemned herself to this— there was no escape from being marginalized. The chains were too long and too heavy to break, wrapped around her wrists, buried in her bones. Born to fight, live to die. That's what she and her old teammates used to say.

Of course, she did it, but only because their metaphorical guns were pointed at her temples.

The members of Overwatch were given a sharp tongue and a hard gaze in passing, and the occasional insult disguised as a catchphrase, because she did not respect them as much as she should have for working with the former heroes of the first Omnic Crisis. She was being paid, she was being sponsored, and she was being fed the lines by all the politicians and adults that sought to hold her and pilot her by her strings.

And she was vibrant. She was so vibrant, it hurt her own eyes. How bright was she to the others, then? Was she blinding, as she had so diligently striven to become? If that was the case, then was the pain worth it in the end? She didn't feel accomplished or proud of her actions, like she should have. She just felt sore and morose and bitter.

When had she become so old in mind as to refer to when she was her younger self as 'the good

old days?', even though those days were hardly any better? When had that happened? She hadn't even realized the change. And it hurt when she glanced at her reflection in her windshield sometimes and wondered aloud, 'how did it come to this?' because she knew the answer. She just feigned ignorance because she was only *nineteen*, god damn it, and she wasn't a child but she wasn't nearly old enough to be looking down on the world with such biased malaise.

She didn't know what to do. She didn't know what she wanted. D.Va was old in mind, young in body, and both of those principles fought for control of her morale so often that it left her stranded somewhere in the middle.

Life went on, because she was D.Va, and D.Va did not need anyone's pity, but she got it anyways and there was nothing she could do about it that she hadn't tried already.

If she could, she would drown her sorrows in alcohol, but even that she was denied, because she 'wasn't old enough' according to Jack, and 'just because she was of age in her homeland did not mean that she was of age here.' What gave him the right to talk down to her like that? He was an old mercenary, one who demanded she call him 'sir' even though she had a higher military rank than him. What was worse that, because she was new and he was a returning member, the others advocated for him, and tutted her for her disrespect. It made her sick to her stomach— she hated the old soldier, and those who sided with him, too, became enemies, moreso than Talon, because she was driven by her selfish desires and not the desire to protect.

So, no alcohol. Which sucked, because alcohol really took the edges off of her.

Luckily, Hana had mastered the art of lock-picking at a young age. As well as the art of persuasion, she supposed, especially when it came to Athena. She was glad that her life forced her to learn such skills, because it made it easier to sneak a drink in every now and then when she hit a low. Vodka and her green energy drinks did not mix together well at all, but whatever would hide the fact that she was mooching alcohol from the storage room would work for her.

The situation still made her frustrated, of course, more frustrated than she had ever known herself to be, but what could she do against a man three times her size and twice her weight whose skills with a gun were rivaled only by the late Ana Amari and Widowmaker herself, who was backed by a team of soldiers of the same calibre?

Besides, stealing liquor was only a temporary victory; the euphoria only lasted so long as there was liquid in the bottle to stomach. As the alternative, she drowned herself in combat, because *damn* if she got left behind just because everyone thought she was weak.

She was not weak. She had to prove that to them.

Hana hated that *that* was what she had to resort to. They didn't trust her, and she hated to say that she was used to it. It almost felt... *natural*, to have to prove herself over and over and over again; to be looked down on. After all, that's what it had always been as D.Va, a rising star in the world of gaming.

Hana had always needed to prove herself somehow, whether that be because of her age or her gender depended on the person. She hated it, loathed it, but she took what she got and gave them back her infamous facade. It was the most she could do without doing anything, because she wasn't allowed to do what she wanted no matter how much she wanted to. That's what hurt most about being an idol— everything she did was determined by what someone else wanted. She was just a body, but her personality, her words, her appearance and her history— those things had been shaped by the government, her parents, and her fans. None of it was her own.

There was nothing she could do, not really; at least, nothing that could change things for the better. Because of that, nothing ever really changed at all. They just got progressively worse the longer the days elapsed. Mission after mission she fought, and there was never any improvement with the situation. She knew it was her fault for choosing this path in the first place, but it was always easier to blame someone else than to have to sort through her own prejudices.

The bitterness and frustration consumed her, but bitterness and frustration were easy to manipulate, and she carried on.

Eventually, she knew not when, nor why, nor what had sparked the thought, she decided to adapt, as subtly as possible. To change. To *evolve*, because it wasn't direct interference and it was the most she could do to try when she had already given up. No changes to herself, no changes to the others. Just... something to see if she could catch their eye and gain some respect. And what she focused on to make that change happen was her arsenal.

Her fusion cannons were strong, but they weren't strong enough or flashy enough to do the damage she sought. She had plenty of ideas to make herself deadlier, to make herself a better, stronger machine, but most of them would require outside help and that was absolutely unacceptable.

She had to work with what she knew— she had been taught basic-through-advanced engineering at the MEKA pre-academy, and she pilfered books on engineering from the archives, Grade A sources Athena gladly helped her find under the assumption her intentions were more innocent than they were. Chemical reactions, basic mechanisms, explosions— she knew how they worked, and she knew how to tie them together. Chemical engineering had been a mandatory class; she was glad. Now, she had sketchpads full of ideas. Corrosive bursts could be added to her fusion cannons for more armor-piercing rounds— a fully rotational axel set at her MEKA's hip for more maneuverability— rocket launchers could be placed on her mech's haunches to get her out of tight situations where her fusion cannons were impractical. There were more, an infinite number of pages more.

In the end, though, she only made one modification: a self-destruct mode with a large radius and an even larger explosion. It took many trials and came with many errors to get the formula right, but in the end, she thought, the results were something to be somewhat proud of despite the circumstances.

It worked brilliantly.

The self-destruct button became her best friend, for lack of a better term. It wiped out legion after legion of mercenaries, terrorists, syndicates, gangs, and any other potential threats Overwatch took on. All it took was the flip of a switch and the press of a button and then it was game over. D.Va: one, bad guys: zero. The others hated it when she told them about it, because it was always easier to ask for forgiveness rather than permission, and nobody would have let her do it had she asked outright, but they let it pass with much reluctance and persuasion. Not that it would have stopped her, anyways.

They told her to use it only as a last resort. She had expected as much. But what they didn't know wouldn't kill them.

Sometimes, she wondered when she had turned into such a bitter thing, and it was then that she knew true confusion, because there were so many possibilities that it would be impossible to pick

only one, because she was not her own, and she didn't know whose memories belonged to whom.

Chapter End Notes

All aboard the pain train! Next stop is... nowhere in sight.

Everything is going to hurt. Seriously. The angst never ends.

Comments are appreciated.

- Ace.

the blood of the lamb

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Gaming was similar to combat in many ways, and not just because of her MEKA suit.

A young, pretty, *female* gamer who outmatched every other person in her league by a long shot? Impossible! To them, at least— the male majority of the gaming world, and the many most of her opponents. They questioned her, called her a cheater, a liar, a fake, and a hacker. They called her a whole assortment of slurs and curses. They called her many things, but she only smiled pleasantly and primly as she crushed them humiliatingly quickly when they tried to best her. To this day, she hadn't lost.

Even then, they came, all red-faced and raging. And they fell, like dominoes, one by one until she was at the absolute top.

Even then.

Even then.

She'd never needed to count how many people she'd defeated. She already knew that it was far too many.

She'd never needed to count how many times she'd been cornered by an eager man and had his hands run down her sides before he got what was coming for him, right where it hurt. It happened enough for it to be unsurprising when it came around, and it was sure to come around. It didn't ever make it any less disgusting, or any less terrifying when it did, and no matter how many times she tried to wash off the feeling of their hands in the shower, the sensations lingered like the scars carved deep into her skin.

She'd never needed to count how many times she'd been forced to the bottom of the ranking list and had to claw her way back to the top. It happened all too often— her arms and legs were tired, but they didn't need to know that. She would claw her way up that list as many times as it took.

She'd never needed to count how many times she'd been called a child. Not enough, apparently. Because she heard it over and over and over and over and over and over and over and over and over again, everywhere she went. The title lurked around every corner and there was *nowhere she could hide*.

Hana was frustrated. And tired and peppy and pretty and perfect and loud and opinionated and violent and snarky and sarcastic and sharp and witty and charismatic and bright and *D.Va*, of all things.

She was D.Va, in part.

And D.Va never backed down from a challenge, even if this double-sided life of hers was more akin to a never-ending labyrinth, where the only way out was...

Gaming was similar to combat in many ways, and not just because of her MEKA suit.

It was similar in the way that there was always a feeling of tense trepidation among the others as she waded into a fight, guns blazing, and it was similar because there was always some form of disbelief when she came out victorious. It was similar in the way that she never lost, and yet, somehow, she was always the loser in the end.

Every chance she got to prove herself, she took. Every mission left unassigned, she completed. More often than not, she came back bruised and tattered, but she never went to Angela willingly for treatment. She was typically dragged there by the good doctor herself. It was to be expected, though. Hana was proud. Hana was secretive. Hana was going to bleed out one of these days because her habits were terribly inconvenient for the state of her health.

Nobody other than Angela knew about the bruises. If they did, it would only be one more reason for them to get rid of her, and that one reason might be the last straw. She couldn't take that risk. She needed to prove to them that she could handle these things by herself and come out unscathed. She figured Angela knew as much, and she hated putting so much trust in the doctor not to tell anyone, but what choice did she have?

"Medical confidentiality," Angela had promised, the first or second time Hana had been dragged into the medical bay and forced into an assortment of gauze wraps and band-aids. "I won't tell anyone else if you don't want me to."

Hana had bit back a curse and turned away angrily. "It would be your funeral," she had seethed through clenched teeth.

"Then I promise I won't."

That promise had held, for the time being— nobody else was told, to her knowledge. Therefore, Hana never saw any reason to stop, if that was the case. If there were no consequences to her actions, then she would fight until they recognized her as someone of equal prowess.

So she fought, and she fought, until everything she was was built on pillars of blood and faux heroics. Still, nothing changed.

Hana stared at the ceiling with a hollow feeling in her gut and fire in her throat. *Coconut rum*, she recalled through a haze. The rum was sickeningly sweet and just as alcoholic as she needed it to be. She wanted to forget, and drinking was the least problematic way of doing so. It didn't involve going to see Angela, at the very least— anything was better than seeing the doctor for something as pathetic as night terrors.

Her shirt was still sticky with sweat from when she had kicked herself awake and stumbled her way to her bathroom to fish the rum out from under her sink. Her nose still burned from the impetuous ending of an unfinished slumber, and her toe still ached where she had stubbed it on the doorframe in her mad dash.

The reason for her abrupt awakening were the objects of her dreams. The worst part was that they were same dreams she usually dreamed. The ones that made her afraid to close her eyes for too long. And they never got any less terrifying— she'd been having these dreams for years, and they were relentless, and one might think that she'd have been able to get over them by now, but she

hadn't.

She couldn't sleep at night anymore without seeing the faces of those she'd killed, like a soldier would. She saw Omnics and humans alike, bodies bloodied and broken by her hand. Sometimes it was the people that strove to find a reason to send her back to South Korea. Sometimes it was people she had never met before; in those instances, perhaps it was a bad omen, and though it *would* be easier to believe that, she wasn't the superstitious type.

Hana never sought help for these dreams. When help was offered, it was shoved back in the offerer's face with a snipe accompanying the blow. Lúcio gave up a long time ago— she was glad. It had always been hardest to lie to him. Lena still tried, occasionally, but it was never verbal, and therefore much easier to reject. Genji would look at her, sometimes, look *through* her, and she hated how she couldn't ever read his expression when he did. Angela was a constant threat. The doctor never relented, and hence, the doctor was never told. Sometimes it hurt, lying to them, like old scars on particularly bad nights. Other times, *most* of the time, she couldn't bring herself to care.

Another swig of the rum slid down her throat. The memories of the dreams were too fresh on her mind— she needed them gone. Gone as soon as possible. Alcohol was the second easiest escape from herself. Aside from— aside from *that one*. The universal escape route. The one that would end her nightmares for good, should she ever find herself brave enough to take it.

But she wasn't brave. Hana was a coward. D.Va was the brave one. Did D.Va want to die? Of course not. And D.Va knew that Hana wanted to, but wouldn't ever find it in herself to seal the deal, and D.Va hated her for it. The weaker Hana was, the stronger D.Va had to be, and tighter stretched the rubber band.

She took a long drink. Something thick and fuzzy sprouted from the place where the rum touched her mouth, eliciting a pleasant buzz into her bloodstream. She would feel sick in the morning, of course, but D.Va lived in the present, to hell with the consequences. The rum was too sweet, too overwhelming, but that was good. Yes, that was good. Her stomach and throat felt like they were on fire but she *wanted that*. It meant that she was forgetting what she'd seen.

All things considered, this night's bout of trauma had been mild. Some nights she would wake up gagging on the gorge in her mouth and shaking so badly she couldn't stand. In those instances, she would stumble to the bathroom and empty the contents of her stomach before sitting there, slumped, with her gun against her temple and blood on her tongue, pondering absentmindedly if she would pull the trigger this time.

This time always became next time, and she would put her gun away and douse her lips in bubblegum-flavored lipgloss and hide the bags beneath her eyes with concealer and she would force her way into the world once more. Once more unto the breach, as Winston would say.

The coconut rum was almost gone. She put the bottle under her sink and clambered back into bed.

Hana was left in a feverish haze, the world tilting this way and that, eagerly anticipating her long-awaited rest. Dazedly, she wondered if anyone would notice the rum was gone. She had explicitly told Athena to erase all webcam footage of her entering and leaving the storage room between hours, but would the AI hold her word? Had the AI already informed Jack that the bottle of liquor had been stolen? These worries nagged at her, incessant, but not oppressive.

Minutes later, darkness overtook her, and at last the dreams were too dim and too blurred for her to make out the gory details.

When she woke, she retched the rum into the toilet, but there were no memories to haunt her this time.

This time became next time. The dark circles under her eyes were long, long shadows that she had to strain to hide, but she would manage. She had to.

Days went by. She knew not how fast, nor how many days went by that she was unaware of. Time flew when she was unoccupied, and when she was busy, it never seemed to pass. She was sent on missions, and she completed them, all across the globe. And life went on in this manner. Missions, streaming, training, reading.

She hated it, despised it, and yet, she did nothing.

Gaming was similar to combat in many ways, and not just because of her MEKA suit.

Because her fingers still buzzed from the angry hum of her fusion cannons as they tore through the air with a ferocious scream. Because her knees still ached where they had been pressed into the hard metal of the central capsule, tightening in their grip whenever an explosion racket her mech. Because her throat still burned from unspilled vomit when she looked back at what she'd done after years of ignorance and realized, *there's no going back now*.

She was not a child, but she was still only nineteen, and she was far too young to be a murderer, but she had walked into this mess knowing that she wouldn't walk out clean-handed.

Knowing that she may not walk out at all.

In team combat, the situation was very much the same as it was when she fought alone.

She never called for help. Of course, she didn't ever need it in the first place— she was above that. She was a winner, and winners never relied on others. After all, Hana was accustomed to a life of independence. She'd had teammates before, but Overwatch was a spiderweb of close relationships and shared memories and she wanted no part in it. Hana was only there to fight, and fight she did.

It was also hard because she had become accustomed to giving orders and having those orders be followed. Her head was an intricate network of strategies, strategies she knew would work, but nobody else did. So when she barked out orders, already knowing the outcome and knowing how beneficial it would be, and nobody listened, it hurt. It hurt and she didn't know why. Why wouldn't they listen? She was talking to walls, talking to herself, and nobody listened. What did they gain from it? She got a crushed pride and a crippling lack of self-confidence despite what she let the world see. What did they gain?

She tried not to think on it much, these days. She still called out unheard orders, a habit she was unwilling to break, but she fought more often than not.

In Eichenwalde, she, Reinhardt, Genji, and Lúcio retrieved Reinhardt's old friend's corpse from an old, battered castle that had marked a key location in the first Omnic Crisis. There, they also retrieved a severely damaged Bastion unit. Lúcio took to it instantly. It joined their team.

Personally, she hated it. She hated it because it looked too much like the Omnic that had desolated her homeland and *ruined* her, ruined her for all that she was. But she kept her visage bright, kept her voice cheery, because Lúcio expected as much from her and who was she to deny him happiness? A people-pleaser at heart, a heart that the world had seized and misshapen.

It took all of her willpower not to kill the battle-born machine, fondly named 'Bastion' by Lúcio. It took all of her and more, and she found herself clenching her gun tightly in her hands on more than one occasion, but she pulled through. She knew not how, for both D.Va and Hana were keen on eradicating Omnis from their shared life, but she had. By some force of nature, she did not kill Bastion, and they went back to Gibraltar to recuperate.

In the far northern corner of Finland, she, Soldier: 76, Mercy, Zarya, Mei, and Zenyatta successfully fended off Talon operatives from an important research facility experimenting with biological weaponry. Reaper and Widowmaker were there, and it was her job to distract them whilst Mercy and 76 evacuated the scientists and Zarya and Mei wiped out the green operatives.

Reaper managed to escape before she could finish him off. However, while she was distracted, Widowmaker was able to launch a purple grenade from her left arm that slid beneath Hana's windshield and shattered against her shoulder. Hana knew immediately that the grenade was filled with some sort of poison, because her vision was blurring and her consciousness was fading and no matter how much she coughed the purple smoke never seemed to disperse. The last thing she saw was Widowmaker grappling herself out of the window; the last thing she heard was the frenchwoman's dry chuckle, no more than a whisper on the wind.

Hana woke some two minutes later to Mei yelling in her comm that she needed back up. The mission was a success overall, but Hana was furious with herself that she had let herself be incapacitated so easily. She headed down to the training center, and punched bags until her knuckles bled and Aleksandra had to drag her away.

In Hollywood, she, Tracer, and Bastion escorted and protected the VIP of a jet black limousine as it made its way through the nigh-abandoned streets. The only threats were urban thugs and heathens, but they were plentiful in numbers, and there was never a time when her finger wasn't on the trigger. At one point, she caught the VIP's eyes through the darkened windowshield.

Thespian 4.0 gasped when he recognized her.

"Hana—?!"

"Can it," she spat at the Omnic, shielding the car with the wide expanse of her mech from a spray of bullets, ignoring the panicked series of beeps the machine gave in response. "If you say a word, I'll call off the mission. Got it? It's D.Va to you."

Thespian nodded and said nothing, not even when he reached the protection of his trailer.

Yes, if she were asked, she would say that she was only there to fight. That was all she ever did anymore, it seemed. All she was good for. Born to fight, live to die.

Hana streamed her missions, but only because the politicians at home said it was her job, and she pumped out flippant one-liners just as often as she pumped out bullets from her fusion cannons. Customarily, most of what she said was making fun of whatever teammates she got sent out with, but she would also shoutout to her sponsors and answer questions from her fans between breaks in

fighting. Her teammates tried to stay out of her camera's field of vision during these times, but it was as inescapable as it was inevitable, and she pursued them just to make them crawl in their skin. Their discomfort was her satisfaction, the only satisfaction she derived from fighting alongside them.

Of the typical team, she was the front-runner, the one who rushed the first visible enemies without hesitation and never looked back— a disruptor, if you will. She took the heavier hits when there wasn't Reinhardt or Zarya to back her up, and she dished out damage before retreating to let her defense matrix regenerate. And then, later, she would make her stand in the heat of the horde before crying, 'nerf *this!*' as she made her escape from the radius of the blast.

Hana was not a team player, a leader at heart, but she still coordinated very well with the others. Her communication skills were acute, despite her reluctance to do so. And when her abilities were combined with that of Zarya or Mercy, she would dare say they were unstoppable.

There was a problem, though. Of course there was— Hana was a problematic existence.

The problem was that she never took an order if it meant retreating. She would stay and fight until she was the last man standing. She didn't just finish the mission— she *culminated* it. She had to be sure that they saw her in all her pink-painted, rabbit-faced glory. So what if she had pressed the self-destruct button, and at that distance there was no way she was unharmed from the blast? She was fine. She would prove it. Look, she could walk, and there was no blood, and 'you're holding up three fingers, Mercy, I don't have a concussion.'

...Of course, it turned out that Angela had only been holding up one finger, and that she had a grade two concussion, and that her nose and lip were broken and split each, and she couldn't even stand upright for longer than a second, but— that wasn't the point.

The point was that she was *usually* able prove herself and her well-being, over and over again, because you can't see wounds behind a shell. Her MEKA was useful in more ways than the obvious. Angela still got mad at her, more often than not, and chastised her as a mother would. The doctor would wipe Hana's face and switch on her Caduceus staff and that disappointed tone would take over her typically benevolent, worn voice. *You should have told me sooner* and *I know a concussion when I see one, stop being so stubborn* were common phrases. It was almost worse than the alternative, which was admitting defeat. Almost, but D.Va was not a loser.

Only when she got back to her room in the aftermath— claiming she needed to tweak something or other on her mech that Torbjörn wouldn't understand because it was 'just something for the twitch stream' —would she let herself slump. When that door closed, she would rip off her flight suit and collapse in the shower, watching her well-hidden wounds run red beneath the scalding water, eyes blurring at the ache— or was that the concussion?

In that way, she racked up more scars than Fareeha, who supposedly held the record. But nobody knew. And nobody would.

She bled because she was human, and she lied because she was human.

But it was all because she was D.Va, and D.Va didn't need anyone's help.

Overwatch is hell and there's no escape.

Do not expect updates to be so frequent in the future, but for now, they will be on a daily basis.

Again, feedback is appreciated.

- Ace.

rise and fall

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

She was also Hana Song.

She was an introvert on a good day, insufferable on the bad, and completely and utterly alone.

Hana was a forlorn child. Apathetic, disagreeable, and timid, with parents that she saw for only a few minutes of the morning before she had to go to school and through the window of her bedroom as they came home from work at midnight. Her house was big and empty in most places, but never dusty.

Her parents were neglectful at best. The older she got, the less they cared, until she realized it was a system to get her out of the house sooner, with a less-than-tragic goodbye. They didn't care what she grew up to be, as long as she was gone. A doctor, a carpenter, a plumber, a wanderer, a soldier. She could do anything, be anything, and it was a very lonely and very uneventful and very unhealthy life that she lived. Lonely as she was, what could she do? She had no friends, and it wasn't as if she could make any—because she could do anything in that house, but friends were absolutely not, under any circumstances, allowed. "Friends are the worst kind of distraction," her parents said, and that was what she grew up believing. When she tried to reach out, her parents smacked her hands and told her off. "You will become the best. Anything less is unacceptable, and you will do it alone, because that is strength. Help is weakness."

She may not have been weak yet, but she was young, and she didn't know that fire burned yet, not until she stuck her thumb in the gaslight and wondered why it hurt.

Youth and fear were flexible, and her parents took those things and bent them into a shape—
Hana Song.

As she left for the day, for school or for alternative purposes, she could say anything.

"I'm going to run away to China with my Omnic wife and start a new life there," she said, once, at age fourteen, when the rebel within her was just beginning to flicker.

"Just be home before 9:00," her father replied, not looking up from his newspaper.

"I'm going to go jump off a cliff. I'll be back for the funeral," she said, once, at age twelve, when life felt dark and crushing like an inescapable ocean.

"Okay. Have fun, sweetie," her mother replied, not looking up from her book.

"I'm going to make a friend today," she said, once, at age nine, when she was still naive and bold and didn't yet know the tooth and claw rule of her household.

A sharp slap sent cold fear jolting down her body. Upon looking up, her mother's face was contorted with rage.

"...Excuse me?"

They came at her with all the fury of a typhoon, and sometimes her cheeks and hands and bosom

still ache where she was smacked. She got the most severe mental beating then that she had ever gotten to this day, and a lesson was burned into her brain with an iron stamp.

Friends were absolutely not, under any circumstances, allowed. They were a distraction. A weakness. Strength is to rise alone.

On that day, she gave up on making friends, and swore herself from accepting help. Or, more accurately, she realized that friends were an impossible concept, something used to induce fear when spoken of, and that strength was to be gained by any means necessary. Memories accompanied the damned word, *friend*, and phantom pains shook her to her core at the brush of a hand on her cheek or a touch of the shoulders. 'Friends' and 'family' were certainties reminding her that if she would rise, then she would rise alone, because if she ever strayed then she would be hurt. Then she would be weak.

Loneliness hurt, too, though. Everything was painful. The world was overwhelming, and she couldn't face it by herself, but she had to. Strength was to rise alone. It was hard for the longest time, because she would see other people and their friends and wonder, *why can't I have that?*

To cope, Hana decided that she would find something in everybody she met to hate, to hate viciously, so that when she asked herself why she hated them, and why she couldn't be friends with them, she would have a reminder stronger than fear. For example, Lúcio tapped his feet to the beat of any song that came on. Lena's voice tended to raise in volume the longer she spoke. Genji's metal skin let off a soft hum that grated at her ears. And those flaws were all they became.

They are a distraction. A weakness.

She had to repeat it to herself when Lúcio brought her his newest album two days ago; when Lena dropped in with a kiss on both cheeks just a few hours earlier; when Genji caught her alone in the hallway to ask her how to beat a level on an older video game last week. *Focus on their flaws. Their flaws, Hana. That's it.*

For the longest time, it was a problematic strategy, because the youngest version of Hana wanted to be friendly. Friendly people weren't meant to be alone, and she really didn't want to be alone anymore. She wanted to reach out, but that had become prohibited, and she was so fucking terrified of the concept of getting close to someone that she panicked and acted on impulse.

It was then that she created D.Va, unconsciously. It was then that she tore herself in two and told her other half, 'you know what to do.' And D.Va knew what to do. Her other half turned Hana's sociability into a weapon, and became a living flame. A wonder to behold, but nothing that you would want to get close to. And she went above and beyond, because she was a child, and she was too young to know that she didn't have to tear herself apart for anyone, that strength was not singular.

But she grew up believing it, practicing it, living it through and through.

At school, she made sure to always shine so brightly that her radiance was intimidating, just to keep her classmates away. She excelled, of course, without any such distractions, but it still hurt at the end of the day, when D.Va had exhausted her efforts and she was back to being Hana. She made sure she always had pluperfect grades, the top student in her grade, with straight white teeth and militaristic posture. And a rotten, withering flower sat at her core beneath her vibrant, vibrant petals.

She came to depend wholly on herself, because her fear of connecting haunted her so. Her name meant 'one,' after all. She wondered if it was a curse, if she was destined to infinitely rise, to infinitely shine, to be the sole brightest star in the tenebrous sky so that there was nowhere else to

look but her. She was blind, so blind, shining so brightly and so infinitely, and she was so, so tired, too.

D.Va thrived under these harsh conditions, spreading like a virus, encompassing Hana like a shell.

And they shone, infinitely, endlessly.

And they shone.

It was wrong to associate more with a supergiant than anyone she had ever met, she knew, but she couldn't help herself from dissociating. She was an iceberg, drifting farther and farther out to sea as the years passed. Everyone knew how the Titanic ended, and made sure to steer clear, but they always got close enough to look at her. 'Look at her, the iceberg, waiting to sink our ship. Look at her, so cold, so jagged. Watch her drift away. You didn't get us that time, iceberg. Nice try.'

Oh, her heart ached for a kindred soul to confide in, but she was caged in thorns and it was human instinct to evade pain.

She was in pain— a pain; an annoyance; a burden— she knew. 'Hana Song' was quarantine, foreign, *bright*, like the sun, and everybody knew the story of Icarus, too. Copernicus had stated that the universe revolved around the sun, after all. She rose each morning with a soul black as the devil but skin like a sunrise. Strength was to rise alone, but fear was to seek closure, and the divide between her and D.Va grew wider every passing second.

Hana had cooked for herself as a child, gotten to school by herself throughout the years, and had always come home with nothing to do when she got there other than wait for the inevitable return of her parents. Home became prison, bedroom became solitary confinement. Her parents were the wardens and she was a criminal.

An escape. She needed an escape from her monochromatic, antipathetic life. She searched far and wide until one was presented to her in the form of an eSports advertisement.

From then on, she began to release her young stresses through video games. The bright colors and intense focus they called for, she found, enraptured her, and she excelled; with time came practice, and with practice came perfection, and she climbed the ranks like a shooting star. Alone, of course. Her parents were glad to have her go and it's not like she had or needed any friends to support her.

She started small. Little tournaments, lower-classed events, and competitions for plastic trophies, until the sponsors stepped up to welcome her into their ranks as a prized possession that they could parade around and feed words that she had to say for them in return for money. Hana accepted, of course, because she had been conditioned to take everything that was given and give back only what everyone else wanted. And they wanted an asset. A pretty face all dolled up in paint, an idol with quick fingers and a foxlike smile and reflexes like a sharpshooter. They wanted someone— someone who *wasn't* Hana Song but looked like her— and was *better* in every sense of the word.

And Hana had *accepted*.

Days became weeks became months, and those months faded into years, and then she was competing professionally. Sponsors came to her in floods, then. She picked and chose from them carefully— she had to, to ensure her own success, and her fame skyrocketed the more and more often her face appeared on more and more notable brands. Strength was rising alone, but if she

had to climb on others shoulders to reach the top, then their sacrifice would be her ultimate victory.

The crowds at the stadium grew to be colossal whenever she made an appearance and she felt very, very small and very, very weak and very, very out of place. Because she knew that nobody wanted to see weak, unfriendly, pathetic, dissociative, *broken* Hana Song.

It was then that she named her counterpart D.Va, and they *devoured* her.

They reminded her of starved wolves, and she was a lone rabbit in the crowd; so became her motif.

Sometimes, she wished she didn't have to be so alone, but it was easy to remind herself that this was all her fault, anyways.

Days passed, competitions came and went with her the obvious victor, and the crowds roared for more. Her winning smile became less forced and more surgically implanted. She was rich, already a world-renowned celebrity at only sixteen. She attended red carpet runs and live debuts and starred in the advertisements of her sponsors and even her own *movie*, of all things. She didn't ever move out of her parents' house— she didn't need to. She hardly saw them, anyways, with all the photoshoots and twitch streams and press conferences she had to attend— as *D.Va*. D.Va, her newest identity. All bright and shining and ready to face the world and all its monsters.

Hana cowered behind her, and was lost. But who cared about her absence? The only one who knew Hana existed was D.Va, and D.Va only told her fans what they wanted to hear, but her fans never asked about her home life, and when they did, she lied. There were no witnesses to prove her wrong, after all.

"What is your real name?"

When that question came up, she would divert the topic quickly and readily. It became a system, a survival setting, a shield for the weakest link of her facade, two personas that grew farther and farther apart the longer the hours stretched.

And she knew that as time flew by, Hana was sinking farther and farther beneath the surface, trying her damndest to disappear for good.

She first broke at sixteen, after a particularly grueling Starcraft II competition in Seoul. One of her male competitors that had lost to her had taken her backstage and pinned her hands above her head, had touched her, had whispered threats of death and rape and whatnot into her ears before she was able to break his arm and escape to the authorities. A policewoman had escorted her back to her hotel room with many empty assurances that things would be all right. She was safe now. She wouldn't have to see him again.

Hana sat for hours, crumpled in the corner of her room's bathroom while the police handled the culprit and all the witnesses, her lips around the barrel of a gun and her fingers on the trigger and there was D.Va, yelling at Hana to stop being such a coward and *just pull the trigger already*.

She never did. She kind of regretted it.

The man that assaulted her went to jail. If it were for her to decide, she would have killed him.

"It'll be all right soon," the authorities told her as they hauled him into a black van by his handcuffs. "He won't touch you again."

Oh, but he would touch her in her dreams, in the mirror, in the shower and every time she closed her eyes. She would feel his hands on her wrists and his pelvis against her hip and his teeth on her ears—

"All right," Hana said, watching the teary-eyed assailant's face disappear behind the slamming of the van's door.

If she had her gun, she would have killed him.

The memory fades.

Chapter End Notes

D.Va's parents are so hard to wriiiiiiiite.

It's gonna get really dark from here on out I hope you've come prepared.

- Ace.

exercises of futility

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Hana Song joined the Korean army because her country needed heroes— not that she was a hero in any shape or form. She was just an idol, a charismatic one with quick fingers and a foxlike smile and reflexes like a sharpshooter. The world needed her known, inspirational face as the face of the MEKA program and what could she do but agree?

Of course, many 'adults' complained about the fact that 'children' were being put in underdeveloped suits and sent out to do an 'adult's' job. But she was not a child. Of course she wasn't. "Born to fight, live to die," she said to the fellow recruits in her barracks one night, and they turned it into a catchphrase and tagged her name to it. An idol wherever she went, she supposed. A soldier, never a child.

From the moment she set foot in her brilliant pink MEKA, she knew what she was walking into. When she took that first step into a war, a desperate fight for survival, she became more aged than the ones who complained about her standing.

She knew, and her teammates knew the possible consequences, and the longer she fought the smaller her team became.

She spoke eulogy at seventeen funerals. Seventeen funerals too many. Hana dreamed about them most nights. About how she could have done things differently, about how many of her squad-mates she failed to save. The dreams were relentless, and they twisted and torqued and ate at her until she could no longer close her eyes without fear.

The world was heavy, crushing, and Hana wilted beneath its weight but did not cave.

She first killed someone at age eighteen. It was a recon test— their final exam in the pre-academy. It had been a protester in Daegu, a man who believed that Omnics and humans could truly live in harmony. *What a joke*, her superiors laughed. *Go on, take care of him, D.Va. Show the younger recruits how it's done.* It was horrifically easy to raise her silenced pistol from within the crowd and pull the trigger. She'd looked him dead in the eye as she'd done it, and his eyes haunted her still.

She had watched the light fade from his gaze, the shock and betrayal and utter confusion ripe on his paling expression along with the spark of recognition. He knew her— the last thing that went through his head was the knowledge that the world-famous D.Va had killed him. Nobody noticed he was dead until it was too late. She didn't notice how violently her hands were shaking until one of her fellow trainees pointed it out.

"I'm all right," she said when they asked. "Yes, I'm all right. Really. No, no, I don't need help. But I think my gun is malfunctioning. Will you— yes, yes, thank you. And really, I'm fine."

She wasn't.

Good job, good girl, her superiors crooned. *Show those protestors what their propaganda means to us. Good girl, our D.Va. Leader of the new age, our D.Va.*

She felt sick, but she smiled for them, she smiled and didn't mean it, because she never meant it when she smiled.

The second person she killed was her closest teammate of the original MEKA squad. Her name was Kim. They kissed the day before their third mission together. Hana might have loved her.

Kim was hit by an electromagnetic blast mid-air. Hana could have caught her. She didn't.

Hana realized then just what a trap love was, and she swore herself from it, because the pain of losing Kim was something she never wanted to feel again. She didn't really want to feel anything anymore, speaking at the eulogy, the fifth of seventeen.

The first MEKA program was shut down in the middle of summer. She went home. She saw her parents once in the morning as she did her makeup, and once at night when she turned off her webcam and went downstairs to get a snack. She saw the man she killed during the exam in her dreams, in the mirror, and everywhere she went. She felt the pain of Kim's death every time she saw two people holding hands in public, or when she caught people kissing quietly in the moonlight.

Kim's hair had been a lovely, brilliant lilac color, hadn't it? Her lips had been very soft. Hana had forgotten what it was like to have someone else's hand in her own.

Years passed— she couldn't stop time. People came and went, and she was drafted into the newest MEKA program. This one was smaller, but better-managed. More promising. Different superiors, she knew, based on their names, but they bore the same faces she used to see. Perhaps that was just the PTSD getting to her. She was sick of death.

D.Va became the leader of the remnants of her team and a shining sigil of hope for the newest recruits. Born to fight, live to die. An idol wherever she went. She led every charge against the Omnic that had risen from the deep to try to ravage her homeland, until that damn colossus of a machine was six feet under, like seventeen of her subordinates.

And ravage it did.

Her hometown was a major target, and she found it in flames when she managed to rocket her way there. Everyone there was dead or dying, and it came as no surprise that when she arrived at her former home, the only things left of her parents were two mangled, rawboned corpses. It didn't hurt like it should have. It felt more like a weight had been lifted from her shoulders as she approached their corpses and crumpled to the ground, staring into their sightless sockets numbly, mouth agape and face ashen. There wasn't much to bury.

At the very least, their deaths made it easy to move out. She sold the house, took her sparse belongings and built herself a million-dollar home in the mountains just because she could. It was big— too big, too clandestine for one person to live in. And it was quiet. The view was often too foggy to enjoy, and it was always too cold for comfort, and eating meals alone at a table meant for ten hurt but she had nothing else to do with herself or her riches other than donate to charities and put it away for her retirement.

She bought a boat. It was a nice boat. Spacious, gleaming white— she never took it to sea. The

ocean held memories and should she ever step into those waters again she would surely be overcome with fear. She bought a car. Five cars, to be precise. And though she had a license, she never drove them, because she only ever needed to travel by limousine and by mech.

One night in the early spring, she opened up a stream and broke the news of her parents' deaths with a straight face, somehow. Those tears never touched her cheeks. She didn't waver. Of course, the sympathy the world gave her upon receiving the news felt forced, but what could she do? Hana never told them that Ji-Hun and Haneul Song had died, just that her parents were killed in the attack. Anonymity was her sole ally.

One night in early spring, she shut off her computer and discarded her headphones, heading to her expansive bathroom to take a bath. She slipped beneath the warm water and closed her eyes, and suddenly she was back on the battlefield, a dark ocean swirling around her, and she thrashed and flailed and choked on the foamy bubbles until she snapped back to her senses and realized that her bathtub had overflowed.

The aquaphobia she now harbored was an infestation. And no matter how many times she forced her body beneath the water, Hana would always kick and scream and think, *what if it comes back?*

She was sick of death, sick of dreaming, sick of being alive. D.Va was a disease, some form of cancer with which she had long been diagnosed. A simultaneously benign and malignant infestation, and Hana suffered from it. There were times the sickness burned, in her mouth and in her eyes, and there were times where it was the only thing that kept her alive. She wished she were brave enough to end it all, but what would the newspapers say? *World Idol: D.Va found dead in own home, hanging from the rafters. Is the world doomed after all?*

Sometimes, she hated being an idol, because she couldn't do what she wanted and she wanted only what she couldn't have— relief.

Life went on. She was powerless to stop it.

She fought, she shone, she inspired, and she would cook meals for herself every night after streaming and look out one of her many expansive windows and lose herself in her thoughts. She would see the man and Kim and her teammates and her parents and she would bend beneath the weight but she *would not* cave.

Hana never mourned her parents' deaths, but sometimes she would visit their graves and tell them about what she (D.Va) had done and ask them if they were proud of her yet, if she was free of them yet. They never responded, and that weight grew lighter, more toxically euphoric every time. It was a poisonous habit, but it got her by.

That adult became a survivor in no time flat, and that idol facade grew wider stretched. Hana knew it would fail at some point, but hell would she let anyone witness her when it did.

D.Va joined Overwatch because the world needed heroes— not that she was a hero in any shape or form. She was just an idol, a charismatic one with quick fingers and a foxlike smile and reflexes

like a sharpshooter. In fact, it hadn't been her choice at all. She'd been drafted there by the Korean government. They told her that the world needed her known, inspirational face as the face of the new Overwatch team and what could she do but agree?

Of course, many of the older members complained about the fact that a child was being put in an underdeveloped suit and sent out to do their job. But she was not a child. She knew that. They didn't.

On her first mission, she was sent with Soldier: 76, Tracer, Zarya, and Genji to infiltrate an Omnic terrorist hideout. "No survivors," Winston had said in the brief. "We cannot take any risks."

That was okay— she understood. She knew the mission, and she completed it. She was good at doing things like that. Following orders to kill, giving orders for the same. In that case, it was the former. Born to fight, live to die.

Hana killed forty-two people, and she did not blink twice. She took three grenades to the front of her mech, and did not flinch. She had two bullets wedged in her abdomen and she did not cry out in pain. The others, in the aftermath, were worried. They constantly asked her if she was alright, offered to help her move around, and eventually harried her into seeing Mercy, who in turn asked if she was in shock. But she laughed it all off, grievously honest when she said that she'd seen worse. She had, after all. Two bullets meant nothing. It just meant that she had to keep going.

Overwatch was nothing like the MEKA Corps. It was almost laughable how innocent Overwatch seemed in comparison. She need not panic, if that were the case.

Her calmness unnerved them, and it was so ironic that they acted like children around her— her, a *child* compared to them.

That night, she buried her hands in gauze because she could not stand to look at them. The hands of a murderer, who had killed forty-two Omnies in cold blood, Omnies who had not fought back hard enough to be considered terrorists. She got no sleep that night, for fear of what she would see in her dreams.

And she hated, *loathed* how she instinctively tried to place the blame on D.Va, when it was really Hana Song at fault.

Hana Song, under the guise of D.Va, who had joined the Korean army two days before she turned eighteen. Hana Song, who was drafted into Overwatch not for the cause, but for the recognition it would bring. Hana Song, who pretended to be a hero. No, she was no hero. She was an executioner, and she was bending the world to her rule. She chose who lived and who died, and she carried out the act of removing those who opposed her.

She felt like a god. Her words were law.

So, no, she did not sleep. She did not sleep with the blood of forty-two misjudged souls on her hands.

They were getting a new recruit. Her name was Satya Vaswani; her callsign was Symmetra. She was 28 years old, and she worked, or used to work for Vishkar. Hana wasn't sure which was the

truth.

Hana was told that she would be sharing a room with her. That was fine. She wouldn't argue. It wasn't her decision, and she hadn't been asked for consent, but she wouldn't complain. She couldn't bring herself to care. Not anymore.

Satya was transported in on a Monday, three weeks after Hana's first mission. Satya was being brought to a smaller, older, dustier base in suburban Bangladesh. Not everyone was at the Bangladesh safe house, though, so it would be a relatively small welcome party if there was one at all (unlike Hana's, which had been big and loud and terrifying). Those who were not in Bangladesh were stationed in Dorado, and in Bangladesh, it was just her, Jack, Hanzo, Bastion, and Zenyatta.

And now Satya.

Hana had never met her before, and didn't know much about her other than the facts that she was given upfront. Apparently, as she was told by a very bitter Lúcio several days prior, Satya's left arm was a prosthetic, she'd done some inhumane things in the past, and she had a dislike for music.

Overall, however, the architech was still a mystery. And, realistically, Hana didn't expect much.

She was called to the central hangar as soon as Satya's transport arrived— very early in the morning. Too early, in her opinion. Hanzo, Jack, and Zenyatta were there to greet their newest recruit when Hana trickled in, but Bastion was absent. She was glad.

"As you know," Jack said as Satya stepped into the hangar, "this is Satya Vaswani. Our newest recruit. She's here on behalf of Vishkar."

"Greetings," Zenyatta hummed pleasantly. Out of all of them, the Omnic was the only one that didn't look disheveled to some extent.

Hanzo gave a noncommittal hum and immediately turned to leave. Not a morning person, Hana figured, whatever hellish time it was. Hana, herself, nodded halfheartedly, shoving her hands in the pockets of her sweatpants and toeing the floor.

Jack sighed at their unresponsiveness, as if he'd been expecting more— Hana sneered at him. He thought he could tell her what to do, could expect so much from her even when he was the biggest fucking disappointment she'd ever met. Fuck him, anyways.

"I'm... I apologize. We're all tired." His voice was low and gravelly behind his visor, and Hana could safely assume he had just woken up. Perhaps they all had, sans Zenyatta, whom she was sure never slept.

It was silent for a long, awkward moment.

Jack cleared his throat. "Soldier: 76," he said, extending a hand. "A pleasure. But... ah... please excuse me. I'm quite sleep-deprived. I'll properly introduce myself in the morning."

Satya shook his hand with hesitance, using only her prosthetic hand. Hana knew immediately that she did not feel safe nor comfortable in the hangar. "A pleasure indeed," the architech replied, her voice equally halting, dark eyes glancing around nervously.

Jack retracted his hand and gestured to his side vaguely. "The one who left was Hanzo Shimada,

our sniper. The Omnics here are Bastion and Zenyatta Tekhartha. And the kid is—" he hesitated. Hana winced imperceptibly. "—D.Va."

Hana nodded in greeting once more when she felt the other woman's sharp gaze pass over her.

Jack sighed again, and then yawned behind his visor.

"...We'll brief you more later," he grumbled. "In the meantime, D.Va," he gave her a pointed glare, to which she growled under her breath— as if he could tell her what to do— "will show you to your shared room. Dismissed."

Jack and Zenyatta exited the small hangar succinctly.

It took her a moment to catch on. She was not awake enough for this— she had been streaming all night. Her eyes hurt. What was it he had told her to do, again? Because Satya was looking at her expectantly, but she was entirely lost.

It clicked, suddenly, like popping a disjointed bone back into place.

"Oh," she said, sleepy and more than a little toneless. "Right. Follow me."

They walked down the cramped hallways side by side. Neither spoke, and when they reached the small bedroom, they changed and got ready for bed in absolute silence. And as Hana was laying in bed, eyes closed and on the verge of sleep, she heard Satya speak.

"Your name is not D.Va," the architech said. It was not a question, nor an attempt to start conversation— it was a statement. A confirmation. Hana opened her eyes and met the other woman's dark gaze.

"No," she confirmed.

"I see," Satya replied, and then, hesitantly, "Since we are working together, I would like to have a steady friendship with you."

Friends. She hated that word. Strength was to rise alone, but she'd already come so far, hadn't she?

Hana opened her eyes and turned to look at the architech who lingered by her bedside, unsure.

She saw so much of herself in Satya, almost as if someone had placed a mirror in front of her and the only difference was that her reflection was a few inches taller. She could see the hesitance, the discomfort. This was new territory, dangerous territory, for both of them, it seemed. "Okay," she replied, voice even, because it needed to be for both of their sakes.

The architech sucked in a breath and said, "I do not know how to make friends."

A memory struck her, violent and sudden. The memory of two, blurred black bodies and the muffled sound of screaming and a paralyzing fear. Her hands trembled.

Hana shook her head. She just needed to sell herself. There was no point in being genuine if she could just convince Satya that they could be friends. They didn't have to be— Hana just needed Satya to believe it.

"That's okay," she said with a forced smile that felt like glass on her lips. "I'll help you figure it out."

Satya narrowed her eyes. "You lie."

Hana winced. She hadn't been that transparent, had she? "True," she admitted. "Friendship isn't my thing, sorry. I'll still do what I can for you, though. Overwatch isn't what it looks like."

Satya exhaled. "Very well. Goodnight."

They said nothing more.

Between the two of them, neither would say that they were friends. If Hana had to describe their relationship, it was more of a close bond between two misjudged individuals built on a foundation of coffee and mutual respect and a shared, similarly growing distaste for Overwatch.

During their time in Bangladesh, they adapted quickly to one another. Hana learned quickly that Satya was autistic, and did not appreciate loud noises or chaos of any sort. She learned quickly that Satya slept exactly eight hours every night, and went to bed at twelve on the dot. She learned quickly that Satya only embraced physical contact when she had seen it coming and had been asked in advance.

She learned quickly that Satya was cold and standoffish in exterior, but tried extensively to be lenient with Hana, and be more friendly to the others every day. She learned quickly that Satya sometimes fell asleep on her work at the tiny, narrow desk that they had, and that it was acceptable and much appreciated if Hana tidied the desk up while the architect slept.

She learned quickly that Satya made her tea very specifically, and that trying to remake it was almost impossible, but she made up for it by supplying the architect with her favorite brand of coffee. A contact in Vienna supplied it to her regularly. She learned quickly that Satya took it black, with three teaspoons of sugar and a swirl of coconut milk.

If you asked if they were friends, Hana would scowl and mutter under her breath to distract herself from the memories and Satya would calmly explain that no, they were merely common figures of a skewed society, neither of which knew what their motives were anymore, nor their morals, and they would much appreciate being left alone. "Thank you. D.Va, let us find other ways to entertain ourselves."

In turn, whenever Hanzo and Jack argued in the kitchen too loudly, which was a common occurrence in and of itself, Hana would go and shut them up. "No, Jack, salt *is not* a spice. Yes, you're being too loud. Did you just notice? Asshole."

In turn, whenever Hana kicked herself awake from another death-laden dream, Satya would be at her bedside with two cups of coffee, one black with three spoonfuls of sugar and a swirl of coconut milk, and one mocha with a healthy dollop of whipped cream. It was a dynamic system.

They stayed in Bangladesh for two weeks, and in those two weeks, Hana found herself to be more content with life than she had ever been, but it had to end like all good things. Hana was a discontented person at heart, too bitter and raw to enjoy her relationship with Satya in full, and in the waning weeks, she digressed.

From Bangladesh, they were moved to an abandoned warehouse in Deadlock Gorge. There, they met up with Lena, Reinhardt, Angela, and Jesse, and things went back to the way they were

before. She got her own room— a secluded corner of the attic, with only Jesse to keep her company whilst Satya, Reinhardt, Lena, and Angela secured the surrounding area. Deadlock Gorge was dreary, and it was hot, and her mech was all the way on the bottom floor so she had no wi-fi or way of keeping herself cool.

The attic was hot and claustrophobic. The air was thick with dust. Sweat beaded and rolled down her sunburned skin— it felt disgusting. She wanted to take a shower, more than anything. She wanted to go back to Bangladesh, where it had just been her and Satya and not—

"Hey, kiddo," Jesse called from the ladder that led to the attic-sized second floor.

Out of spite, she did not respond.

"There's food down here, if you want to come on down."

She didn't. She would rather starve than eat anything the cowboy had to offer— from what she had gathered from Jack's incessant complaining, Jesse's cooking was shit, and she didn't want to test the theory, as much as she loved proving the old soldier wrong.

"Should I bring up a plate or—"

"I'm not a child." she snapped, turning to look at him with a pointed glare, and he flinched back. "I will come down when I want to, and no sooner."

They stared at each other for a long moment before Jesse left, clambering down the ladder and shutting the trapdoor behind him. For a few seconds more, everything was still. And then Hana swore loudly in Korean and whipped around to punch the moth-eaten wood of the wall. The skin of her knuckles tore easily against the aged, maggoty wood with a violent squelch, and the wall did not break but her knuckles did— she heard them crack upon impact.

All she could think was, *Angela is going to kill me.*

She stared at her bloodied hand in amazement and stunned rage. Large slivers of wood were lodged beneath the skin, and mahogany blood dripped down her fingers in thick tracts. Her rubber band was stretched to its limit. She was breaking, snapping, one strand at a time. It wouldn't be long, now. That was not good. Not good at all. Weeks without fighting, without a distraction, were taking their toll.

When Angela arrived back at the warehouse, she took immediately to Hana's side, brows furrowed and knit in confusion and worry.

"Why are your hands bleeding? What did you do?"

Hana met Satya's gaze from across the room, and she knew immediately that the architech had figured exactly what had happened in her absence. But the older woman said nothing of the matter, only nodding with an unsure smile and turning away.

They were transferred back to Gibraltar from Deadlock Gorge. Aleksandra had called her *child soldier* as soon as she entered the base. D.Va had smirked and quipped, "I'm still more of a soldier than you," to which Reinhardt had laughed uproariously and thumped her on the back hard enough to make her splutter.

That night, she punched and shattered her bathroom's mirror, the fragile thing, hardly useful for taking her anger out on. Satya came to her a few hours later with a new mirror, a roll of gauze, and two cups of coffee. Hana accepted the gifts and asked if Satya would come in and talk to her for a bit. The architech nodded and took a seat at the foot of her bed, unrolling the gauze and offering to help her put it on the lacerations covering her hand.

The two of them talked for a while, about politics and their next mission and the theory of everything and coffee before Hana decided to take a risk and tell Satya her name. The idea came out of the blue, unfounded and random, but she chased it down with blind vim. D.Va yelled and scrambled to stop her, but she was already speaking.

"Hana," she mumbled, quick and inexplicit. At the outburst, Satya blinked and looked up from her mug, dark eyes questioning. Hana's throat constricted, and D.Va was yelling so, so loudly in her ears, screaming that this was far too risky, that she needed to stop. And she knew— this went against everything she had ever known, and her heart was pounding and she was seizing up and — and why had she thought this was a good idea in the first place because she was regretting everything now, seizing up, unable to go back, unable to press on.

"Pardon?" Satya asked, oblivious to her turmoil.

Hana opened her mouth. A strangled groan left her, and she buried her face in her hands.

She was close, she was so, so close—

"I—"

...She couldn't do it.

"It's nothing," she said, removing her bandaged hands from her face and staring at her unfinished coffee. "It's nothing."

That night, she dreamt of an ocean, red and copper and swirling and there was blood in her mouth and her nose and it burned, and she forced herself awake and the cycle began anew.

D.Va was only a defense mechanism. D.Va was also spectacularly exhausting, but nobody in Overwatch knew about Hana Song and she was intent on keeping it so. Because D.Va was the strong one, and Hana was the weak one, and she was sure that if anyone found out about Hana then that would be the end of her fighting days.

So, she persevered. She had to. She smiled (grinned), laughed (cackled), and lived (survived). Because she was D.Va, and D.Va was as much of a winner as much as she was alone. Alone in a base full of people she didn't know quite enough, nor respect in the least.

And she was lost. She was terribly lost. Overwatch may have resembled a family, but she was still a mongrel in the pureblooded mix, orr was it the other way around? She kept everyone at arm's length because she was terrified of the camaraderie they offered, Satya excepted, and led them (and herself) to think that it was out of spite because she was still angry, and she was so, so close

to her breaking point. They were still far away, off on their ship and she on her iceberg. They could close the distance if they ceased judging her by her youth, but change was only hardly possible at this point.

It was a horrible, manipulative strategy, but it would save her in the long run. Even though how much she wanted to find closure in them tore her apart, despite the bitterness and frustration she held against them. Hana wanted to love them, and be loved in turn for all that she was, but she had made herself into a monster and only makeup could hide the scars.

She knew that makeup only lasted until it was washed away. She knew the risks.

But she was D.Va, and somehow that would always be her downfall.

Chapter End Notes

Satya's and Hana's friendship is important to me. ;-;

The salt is not a spice joke comes from ArcaneAdagio's fic, *Overwatch Emergency Communication Channel (I Swear, It's Emergency Only)*, which, if you haven't read, go do it now it's iconic.

As always, feedback is appreciated. Also, if anyone has any little ideas I could incorporate into TYNS, let me know (ie. headcanons, blurbs, etc.)

But next chapter though oh boy.

Ohhh boy.

- Ace.

to drown

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Angela found out, eventually. Of course she did.

Of course it would be *her*, too, which was almost even better, and almost as hysterical.

It couldn't have been Mei, or Lena, or Reinhardt or Lúcio or *anyone* who would have taken it better.

Hana had simply thought that nobody else would think to use Watchpoint: Vík í Mýrdal's showers at 3:36 in the morning. She had foolishly let her guard down, had been sitting alone on a nearby bench in the aftermath of a shower, letting her hair air dry whilst examining a particularly fresh and particularly nasty burn across her elbow that she had neglected to inform anyone of. The young pilot was dressed in nothing but a sports bra and a pair of underwear. There was a bruise just to the left of her navel— a beautiful myriad of sickly yellow and purple. There was a small cut on her brow from a stray piece of shrapnel.

The mission itself hadn't been bad— it had gone quite well. They successfully recaptured a hostile boat, one armed with enough explosives to turn a city to dust. Hana had simply been caught in the blast of a stray grenade, and it had snagged her arm and the edge of her brow. Nothing major, nothing visible, but it was enough that it bothered her into disappearing in the aftermath.

She'd bypassed dinner, settling instead for a bag of D.Vas and a strange but somehow pleasant soda imported from a fan in Taiwan. She'd streamed twice before midnight and once at two in the morning, before ultimately deciding that she wanted to shower before bed.

Which led her to her current situation.

Hana hadn't heard the metallic door hiss open, too lost in her own thoughts, but she definitely heard the doctor's thumping footsteps (too late, of course) as the blonde rushed over and yanked her elbow from her, fingers stinging cold where they lay across her warmer skin, across the searing heat of the healing burn.

Hana did nothing but gape with a mouth half-open, eyes wide with shock and fear as the doctor examined every visible scar across her body, frigid eyes narrowed in something that the younger woman could only assume was disappointment. It had to be disappointment. Why would it be anything else?

Angela had seen her scars before, or at least, the ones on her arms, from her time in the South Korean military. The doctor had taken care of her injuries many times, but never had her injuries been grievous or called for undressing. And never had any wound treated by the doctor called for *scarring*, which was what Hana was sure Angela was thinking about, where the doctor was eyeing her with an expression almost contorted with rage. Where Hana was two garments away from being entirely nude, she was completely exposed to that piercing gaze. It was terrifying. The fear burned in her chest, and she wanted to run, but she didn't trust her legs to get her very far.

Her hands twitched. The silence was deafening.

Angela sighed, eventually, closing her eyes and exhaling through her nose. Hana flinched, because she *knew* that expression, and she had only seen it given to Lena, who had the highest injury rate, and only when the Brit had done something particularly sacrificial.

"I'm going to shower," the doctor said quietly, with an undertone of that righteous fury that radiated around her on the battlefield. Then again, Watchpoint: Vík í Mýrdal's shower room should have never been a battlefield, but that was probably her fault.

"When I'm done," Angela continued, "we're going to head back to my office, and we're going to talk."

There was no question. Hana didn't have a choice. Of course, she didn't think she would, but she had hoped.

The doctor left her, then, and Hana almost bolted right then and there, but she couldn't move, couldn't *breathe*, couldn't get enough *air* to *function properly*. D.Va struggled to take control, and *oh*, how she wanted her alter ego to take the reins but she couldn't form any sort of coherent thought to process the command. Hana was stuck in her own body, and D.Va had been in charge for so long that Hana had forgotten all the controls. She was frozen. Petrified. Subconsciously, she had managed to bow her head and rest her clenched, bone-white fists on her knees, but she was still struggling to catch her breath. Humans needed air to breathe. Wouldn't that be nice, if it didn't feel like she were drowning, instead?

She hadn't had a panic attack like this since the day before her first professional gaming competition, but she got the feeling that this one was the worst one yet. The situation was much more dramatic, the consequences more dire. Her throat hurt. Her eyes burned. And still, she couldn't find air. The steam around her was materializing into a dark, swirling ocean. *The* ocean. Oh, god, the *ocean*. She was drowning. She was *drowning*. The world was spinning, and it was *too hot* and she couldn't *breathe*—

And then there was Angela in all her angelic glory. Angela, who took her trembling hands and held them close before her fingernails could break the skin. Angela, who looked more composed, more gentle with her still-damp hair and pale blue eyes. Angela, who was dressed in an uncharacteristically unprofessional tank top and shorts. Angela, who enveloped Hana in her light, wrapped her up in safe, steadying arms, and told her to breathe.

The ocean stilled, steadied, and dispersed. Hana blinked, coughed, shuddered, and then sucked in a hesitant breath. Huh, she could breathe again. Odd.

Something inside her snapped. Soundless, but powerful.

And just like that, the air was rushing back into her tight, frantic lungs and she was sad, angry, and confused all at the same time, and maybe she stumbled over her words one too many times but there were definitely tears either way. It was too much for her to comprehend at once, her conscience left in the dust by fear. That deep-seated ache in her chest was starting to fade, and she *talked*. Ranted, more accurately, words spilling out of her like the water she so keenly remembered.

Hana told Angela everything while she could, when she could, before D.Va could recover from the overwhelming wave of long-contained emotion, and Angela listened. The doctor never interrupted her like she thought she would, only murmured for her to breathe when she got going too fast, only pet her hair when her voice broke after far too long, and held her until all of her tears had dried and the clock on the wall said that it was five in the morning. Hana spoke of her anger, spoke of D.Va and of Hana Song, though the name tasted like the bitter fruits of betrayal on her

tongue. She spoke of her parents, and what they'd done to her, and the loneliness and the frustration and the confusion until she could no longer speak.

When she pulled away, there were tears on the doctor's face, too, and Hana thought that she never wanted to tell anyone anything ever again. Because something that had been buried within her was resurfacing, and her hands would not stop shaking. And though she wasn't a kid anymore, she would admit that that was the first time she had ever felt like a child, and she hated it.

"Idiot," D.Va spat. "What a fucking noob you are. Letting yourself be parented like that—it'll get you. You'll see."

She knew, but she was a sucker for pain.

In hindsight, she was glad it had been Angela who found Hana, and not anyone else, because then things would be different and she preferred them the way they were.

D.Va scoffed. "You'll get yourself killed like this."

She numbed out the facade, and let herself revel in being Hana Song for once, let herself revel in being a failure, in weakness, in being a bigger disappointment than Soldier: 76. It reminded her of the time she held her face in front of the heater as a kid and pretended to have a fever. It feels similar to that, the sickness of lying, of being something she wasn't, but for a purpose less than honorable.

To be honest, she had no idea what she was doing, or what it would do to help her ultimate cause — not being called a child, but she wanted to see where it took her.

She found herself on one of Vík í Mýrdal's black sand beaches the next day— it was one of those rare, quiet days in which nobody was deployed and everybody was left to their own devices. The white water lapped at the shoreline several feet away from where she stood, the cool, late autumn breeze tussling her hair, the sky a masterful arrangement of argent and stormy gray.

She was glad Iceland was so remote a location, and she was glad that she had been given the proper time to think. After the conversation with Angela in the showers, the doctor had mercifully told her to take her time to recuperate, because she would likely be exhausted for several days if she had been holding everything in for so long. Hana hadn't expected the blonde to be right, even though she'd said it so confidently that there was no doubt she spoke from personal experience, but here she was. Bone-tired and deep in thought.

Now that the rubber band holding her together had snapped, what would happen? Would she make a new one, or would her body adapt to having no restraints? What would her personality do from here on out? Would she become more bitter, more confused? Would her brightness become untamable instead? And what would happen to the dividing line between Hana Song and D.Va? Would D.Va disappear? Would Hana? It would only make sense that the two sides of herself would combine now that they had been discovered, or that one of the two would fade from existence, but that was also equally unlikely, because D.Va had become such a mandatory and contradictory force to Hana's meekness.

Would the others find out about Hana? Would Angela tell them what Hana had told her? Would they kick her off the team for it? Secrets were frowned upon in Overwatch. She didn't doubt that they would do it, given enough evidence. And she had plenty given them the evidence they

needed to send her home. Her disagreeability on past missions, her frequent discarding of direct orders, and her overall rudeness and bite when they had tried to approach her amiably.

Perhaps she had even been avoiding going back to Watchpoint: Vík í Mýrdal for this reason. Perhaps she was afraid of what she would hear upon her inevitable but prolonged return. She didn't know what would happen— everything up until recently had been muddled with uncertainty, but now there was an ominous gap looming before her and she didn't know what would come when she got to the other side.

These thoughts had been consuming her. Hana didn't even know what time it was anymore, or how long she'd been standing there, looking out across the broad ocean spreading farther south than she could see. It was quite peaceful, a picturesque, solitary scene that she would surely come to treasure should things go wrong when she returned. And she would return, eventually, but she was going to hold on to this tranquility for as long as she could.

After all, there were no screens, no cameras, no scanners, no graves, no titles. Just the ocean and the beach and her thoughts and— and someone else walking towards her?

She heard the footsteps but didn't turn to greet the person that had come to join her. She didn't know who it was, but she could safely assume that the answer would come to her shortly. Her previously still heart started drumming a nervous tempo. Her fingers itched but she did not move.

The footsteps came to a stop beside her. She caught a glimpse of royal blue out of the corner of her peripheral vision. Perhaps it was Fareeha.

"I heard from Angela. I thought that you might like some company."

Of course it's Fareeha, she thought with a slight huff. Of course Angela would tell *her* about yesterday's incident, if no one else. She vaguely wondered if the doctor had told Jack, too, or everyone else, but soon realized that the other woman was still waiting for an answer.

She turned to the Egyptian, having to peer upwards because of the significant difference in height, and shrugged. There was nothing but honesty in the tiredness of her slouched posture— surely nothing like the D.Va that everyone had become so used to.

"Do what you want," was what she said, at a length, because while it wasn't a *no*, it wasn't an invitation, by any means.

Fareeha hummed in response and shuffled a tad closer. Their arms were almost brushing. She could have sworn that the minimal distance between them was purposeful, but she didn't want to delve too deeply into that train of thought. Her mind was racing enough. Regardless, it was still a comfort to have the empty space. Should she want to leave, it would be easy to peel away from the Egyptian's side.

"...Has Ziegler told anyone else?" Hana asked after a moment, but only because the thought was still nagging at her and she was too tired to entertain it for much longer.

Fareeha shook her head with a slight shrug of her broad shoulders.

"The information shared was extremely private. I assume she only told me, and then she told me to talk to you, but I'm not sure what I'm supposed to say that you haven't already heard."

Hana snorted softly, but the relief that statement filled her with made her shoulders slump.

"You two don't have to act like my parents. I'm not a child."

Fareeha chuckled, but sobered quickly. "About that. I wanted to apologize for persistently using your age against you. I had no idea it affected you like that."

She snorted again, rolling her eyes, wringing her hands in her pockets. "I thought I'd made it obvious, but whatever. I didn't actually tell anyone until yesterday, besides Sat— Symmetra.."

"Still. I'm sorry. Is there any way I could make it up to you?"

The part of her that still held resentment against Overwatch for belittling her so reared its ugly head, and she sucked in a breath to snarl, but she stopped herself at the last second, and thought.

"Spar with me," she said. There was still resentment in her tone, but she mostly sounded tired, perhaps even relieved. "Respect me. I'm nineteen, but I'm every bit a soldier as the rest of you. I just want to be your equal, and not feel like a burden." She hesitated, glancing up at Fareeha nervously. "And, maybe, try trusting me a little more? I can handle myself. I can watch your backs. I just— I don't want to feel *useless* anymore."

Fareeha smiled warmly down at her. "I can do that."

They fell into a comfortable silence, both perfectly content simply looking out across the pale ocean and black sand and wintry sky.

Again, Hana's thoughts carried her away.

Fareeha's good for Angie, she thought, absentmindedly, scuffing her feet against the sand. She's good at providing quiet, stalwart support, in contrast to Angela's metaphysical need to immediately take action. They make a nice pair. Even if she was more than a little jealous of the happiness they'd found in each other. For her part, she was still terrified of making connections, so much it made her uneasy to even think about it. Damn her phobia.

A particularly chilly breeze brushed against the back of her neck, and she shivered slightly. Fareeha must have noticed.

"Do you need to borrow my coat?" the Egyptian asked.

Hana took one look at that ludicrous blue jacket that was at least eight sizes too large and immediately knew her answer.

"Let's just head inside— it'll only get colder from here on out," she said with a lopsided, weak grin, a grin that the other woman returned with ease.

Hana reluctantly agreed to let herself be carried on Fareeha's back the several miles it took to get back to Watchpoint: Vík í Mýrdal and fell asleep within a mere few minutes, thinking about what was to come, with that ridiculous blue coat draped over her hunched shoulders.

In her sleep, Hana dreamed.

She dreamt she was nine, of her parents, of early morning melancholy and late night loneliness and then she was crying herself to sleep because she knew nothing she did would ever be enough

to please them. She dreamt of sharp words and fingers, cold and crawling beneath her skin. She dreamt of a cage, ears echoing with the words, *strength is to rise alone*.

She dreamt she was twelve, and she was falling, life flashing before her eyes, and knew that she needed to be back for the funeral, but she wasn't sure if she would make it at that rate.

She dreamt she was fourteen, the reds and oranges of the festival blurring in her vision and sounds of downtown Beijing buzzing in her ears, with a hand in her own and a warm feeling in her chest. There was a metallic hum in her ear, whispered promises in the lamplight— red sands in an hourglass trickling away too quickly for her liking, like blood from an open wound.

She dreamt she was sixteen, still so young and already at her first international competition, bright lights flashing in her eyes, ears ringing, smile aching, fingers shaking. The crowds were untamable, roaring and screaming a name. *Her* name. She felt sick and hot and breathless. It was exhilarating. It was violating. Her body felt like clay, and a thousand splayed across her surface, shaping her into something that looked less like Hana and more like D.Va.

She dreamt she was nineteen, and she had already seen enough bloodshed to last a thousand lifetimes and she was so, so old in mind and still considered a child. The bitterness was thick like wax and lodged in her heart like a nail, driven deep into her core with the sadness and crushed dreams of a broken childhood.

She dreamt of a pair of gravestones, and asked again if she could be free yet, if she'd finally made them proud. She knew the answer, but it was tradition to ask, every year without fail on the damned day of their deaths.

A voice whispered in her ear— *you know what to do*.

She woke up in her bedroom with tears on her face and a blue coat beneath her head and a voice echoing in her ears and she knew what she needed to do. It would take time, but she finally had a set direction and a destination in sight.

"It's a dead end, Hana," D.Va warned. "This road to recovery— it'll end at some point. You'll see."

Pointedly, she ignored her counterpart and threw off the covers.

Chapter End Notes

To all the people who have been asking: yes, this story has a plot (albeit vague; this story is more of a character study than anything, but I do have a set direction and an end in sight). It also gets happier... eventually. There's just going to be a lot of heavy, heavy angst before we get there.

Comments are appreciated! Everything is! You could literally post 'Harembe lives' here and that would be great.

See you next chapter.

~~But someone else won't.~~

- Ace.

the price of ignorance

Chapter Notes

TW: blood.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Her first mission since Vík í Mýrdal was a reconnaissance one. Get in, record some footage of a Talon checkpoint, and get out at the end of the day. Angela had been hesitant about letting her go, with the knowledge that she had, but Hana was persuasive. Although, she supposed it was mostly because Fareeha had taken her side that she was *really* allowed to go, but she would take what she got without complaint.

The strike team had set out from Kashgar— a small, dusty city in northwestern China— into a barren, cliff-laden area of the Taklamakan desert. They had set up camp somewhere along a lengthy ledge on one of the cliff's faces, concealed by several boulders that Hana had moved over to their position, just in case, and began their work.

It seemed a little counterintuitive to send a clunky, fuchsia, plus-sized mech on a reconnaissance mission in the *desert*, of all places, but her mech was a walking wi-fi hotspot, and the mission was out in the middle of nowhere and they needed the connection.

She was on a team of four— herself, Genji, Symmetra, and McCree. All she needed to do was sit around in her mech while Symmetra's drones tried to get an up close look at the Talon campsite. The architech needed the wi-fi to control said drones, hence why Hana was there.

Genji had the binoculars, and was tracking the enemy troops' positioning. His job was to constantly inform Symmetra of any changes whilst the architech created the little drones. Hard light structuring confused Hana, so she let the older woman do her thing undisturbed.

And then there was McCree.

McCree had insisted on coming, reasons unknown, but she had a pretty good idea of why. It's not like the cowboy was being subtle with the looks he was casting at Genji's backside. The cowboy was currently lounging against her side, fiddling with his gun. His hat was pulled down over his eyes, and she supposed he thought he was being discreet about where he was looking, but occasionally he would inhale sharply and his face would flush and he'd tug upwards on his serape to hide his blush, and Hana was suffering because he was *hopeless*.

To them, she was still D.Va, and it was odd having to force herself to be flippant now that Hana's true nature had been revealed, but she would manage. It hurt, and the words felt like glass in her throat, and shining brightly was more exhausting than she had ever remembered it being, but Hana would not yet be exposed, even if D.Va was no longer around to protect her.

"Gross," she said. The cowboy beside her glanced up at her and quirked a brow in question.

Hana (D.Va) rolled her eyes as if it were obvious and explained anyways.

"If you were just going to come here to be gross, could you at least make yourself useful and help Genji scout the area rather than scout Genji's ass?"

McCree's questioning expression morphed into a wide grin and he tipped up his hat upwards to look at her more directly.

"Now why on Earth would I do that, young lady? As you can see, Genji's ass is much more interesting than anything the desert has to offer."

His voice was low, like he was trying to keep the Japanese man in question from overhearing, but one glance over at the cyborg said that Genji was listening intently, but pretending not to— or maybe she was just perceptive like that.

"Ah, so you *are* only with him because of his ass," she commented, and she almost smirked at the way the cyborg's shoulders flinched slightly, as if he had been offended by the remark. She didn't think McCree noticed, not when he was too busy speaking, still looking at her.

"Naw," he drawled, and twirled his gun around his pointer finger experimentally. "He's a real sweetheart, he is. Not a bad ride, either."

It was her turn to quirk a brow. "And you would know? Someone's been getting touchy-feely."

The cowboy wagged his eyebrows at her, making obscene gestures with his hands and pelvis.

She made a face as the realization hit her.

Repulsion. Genuine repulsion flooded her, but Hana masked it quickly as to not offend the cowboy. His relationship status shouldn't effect her, it really shouldn't, but it did, and it wasn't his fault— she needed to control herself. Bitterness and frustration were flexible, but repulsion was wild and unpredictable.

It hurt, having to be D.Va in front of them. Words that used to come so easily to her now came in small, unfocused bursts, and she couldn't keep the sneer out of her voice when she spoke.

"Oh, ew. I mean, I totally knew you two were fucking, and now Hanzo owes me twenty, but ew." She and Hanzo hadn't actually taken bets, but she would say anything to hide her discomfort at this point.

"Language," Genji said sharply, not taking his eyes away from the binoculars. The shard of D.Va wedged within her sputtered angrily for a second but Hana took control just in time to quell the most of the flames. In the end, she just huffed, muttered a little '*fuck you*' and returned to surveying the bland, yellowed scenery. It was not quiet for very long, and, surprisingly, it was Genji who broke the newfound silence.

"Symmetra, groups A and C are shifting position. Heading northwest, it seems. Speed is progressive, but not alarming."

The architech several meters away murmured an 'acknowledged,' but didn't respond or react other than that. She only continued to work more intensely on her hard light construct, from what Hana could see.

Hana hazarded another glance at McCree, and found him openly staring at Genji again with a dopey, lovesick sort of smile. She also noticed that Genji's fingers were fidgeting slightly. If she had to guess, then she would dare say that he was smiling beneath his mask.

A gagging sound elicited from her lips almost unconsciously, effectively dragging the the two men out of their trance, and causing McCree to scowl.

"You're distracting," he grumbled.

"You're distracted," she shot back, not missing a beat.

He shrugged, frown twisting, but said no more.

Hana watched as his gaze traversed back to Genji, and his posture relaxed and his expression softened. He burrowed his chin into the neck of his serape, to hide his smile, she assumed.

The jealousy was hot, her fists clenching and unclenching around her joysticks, and her eyes darted between them until she could no longer stand to be in their presence.

"Ugh, I can't— god, you're both so *gross*."

She jerked on her controls to make her mech stand upright, therefore causing McCree to stumble and fall flat on his back with a startled squawk.

"You two are being gross, so I'm going to go sit with Symmetra, who's like, actually cool, and not *gross*, McCree, and I'm going to take over binocular duty— Genji, don't look at me like that, I know you're hardly paying attention to anything but Cowboy Bebop over here— and we're actually going to get work *done*. Have fun being disgustingly romantic or whatever."

And she left, lumbering over to the only other woman and hunkering down next to her as she worked, fingers intricately dancing around a small, stringy mass of pale blue light.

Hana was content simply watching her for a while, thinking that perhaps Symmetra would be good at playing the piano, before the intricate web of light materialized into a metallic white drone with small wings on its sides and a camera jutting out of the bottom.

It was too quiet. Hana was fine with the silence, but D.Va—

"Nice weather we've got," she said without thinking, and winced a little bit at how unprofessional it sounded— a conversation starter that was certainly not appropriate for the current situation. Little pieces of D.Va kept sneaking their way into her manner of speech, and though she tried her best to banish them, it was second nature to her.

Symmetra didn't seem to care, though, and only cast her a puzzled look as she moved from the drone to the computer set they had towed up to the ledge. The older woman began tapping at the screens, obviously preparing to hook up the drone to Hana's wi-fi, and then directly to the architech herself. It was fascinating how quickly and primly Symmetra worked, though Hana doubted she'd ever say as much aloud, to save both herself and the architech from the awkwardness the statement would bring.

"Drone is ready to be deployed," Symmetra said, working on autopilot as she pulled up the drone's controls on the central screen. "Waiting for wi-fi activation."

"Roger!" Hana (D.Va) chirped and flipped the switch that activated her wi-fi.

The drone pinged in response almost immediately.

"Drone online. Moving it to vantage point Alpha."

She watched as the drone's wings began to buzz. The small, metal construct lifted itself off of the ground and whirled off towards the Talon campsite, which was no more than a group of small black dots in the distance.

"And now we wait," Hana sighed aloud, turning on her scanner before lifting her hands off of her

controls and flipping on her cooling system, so that her mech didn't overheat in the blazing scorch — everything beneath the Taklamakan sun.

Her cooling system couldn't hold out forever beneath the sun's intense glare, and eventually she was just as sweaty and miserable as the other three, lounging in the cockpit of her mech in a dazed sort of state, guzzling water out one of the canteens Mercy had packed them.

Hours passed. Genji and McCree were chatting quietly. Symmetra was busy navigating the drone. Hana was dozing in the cockpit of her mech, overheated and semi-conscious. It was nice.

It was semi-consciously that Hana noticed something approaching in the near distance, undetected by her scanners, cutting through the air towards their position. They were black specks that were growing larger with every passing second, appearing to gain speed the longer she looked at them. They looked somewhat familiar, but she was too hot and too dizzy to know exactly what these three shapes were.

And then it hit her with a cold rush of dread when the shapes flew in front of the sun for the briefest of moments, forms silhouetted against the glowing orb. She never thought she would have to see mortars again, not after the Korean Omnic threat.

"Get down!" she shrieked into her comm, jerking her mech upwards and activating her defense matrix as quickly as she could. But it wasn't fast enough. *Weak*, she thought. *D.Va was right*.

The impact of the fiery explosions made the entire cliffside shake, and Hana couldn't see anything because of the thick smoke filling her vision, filling her lungs. Her fingers were singed, but at least her MEKA had blunted the most of the impact, save for the fact that it had horrible black smears across its surface. Symmetra's shield must have broken the instant the mortar crashed against it.

But that wasn't what she was worried about. That wasn't even *relatively* important to her right now.

"Symmetra!" she thundered into the comm. "Genji, McCree, please respond!" All she got in response was static. Her heart was pounding.

Ring.

Hana hefted herself off of the broken ground to get a better view, grunting and fiddling with her controls to make sure everything still worked. Her cockpit window was cracked, her visuals fizzing in and out of focus. Upon looking closer, her scanners showed that her comms system was fatally damaged, and her left fusion cannon had a gauge preventing it from moving or shooting, locking it at the elbow. She wasn't as fine as she thought, would like to think, needed to be.

Ring. Ring. Loud, blurred. Confusion. Panic. Move. Move, damn it.

Smoke filled her vision, and when she breathed her lungs burned and ached at the bitter taste of it. She coughed, and coughed, and then realized it was hopeless and let it burn within her. Hana began to wade through the smoky, black ocean, eyes viciously tearing through the haze, scanning for any sign of life.

The smoke faded quickly when a strong breeze picked up. Hana winced against the wind, blinked, and then inhaled sharply.

She could only see Symmetra, and at first glance she already knew that the architech was in critical condition. D.Va knew that she needed to do something about the blood, but all Hana could think about was *no, no, no, no, don't do this to me. I'm just getting better, you can't do this to me.*

"Satya!" she cried, voice cracked and hoarse from the smoke, and stomped her way through fallen rocks and thick dust towards the older woman. Upon getting closer, she could identify a number of serious wounds, and her mind was racing, heart pounding, and she wished her comm wasn't damaged so that she could contact Mercy and get the medic to their position, but the emergency transmitter was back on the ground, several thousand feet below. She knew she needed to get to it, but her teammates were her top priority.

Symmetra was unconscious, bleeding from a deep gash in her forehead, her back sustaining heavy burns. The architech's prosthetic arm had been ripped off, and there were various other incisions across the her skin.

No, no— I was just getting better. I was almost there. What did I do? What did I do wrong?

Hana (D.Va) picked Symmetra up carefully and draped her body over her MEKA's damaged arm, and went to find the others that she had naively abandoned, cursing herself all the while. She kept her eyes peeled for any more incoming missiles, but there were none. It had been a preemptive strike, it seemed.

McCree and Genji lay close together, and they appeared to also be unconscious, but they were alive, at the very least. Neither of them were injured as badly as Symmetra, but they, too, were suffering from various gashes and burns of varying degrees. One of McCree's legs was bent at an angle that made her stomach reel. Hana picked them up, too, cradling them close to her mech's torso, and ambled over to the cliffside.

Ringin. Filling her ears. Sharp, focused, making her head buzz.

It was a long way down. Honestly, her group had been confident enough in the innocence of the mission to think that they could safely be transported out by Tracer once the day was done, but it was far from sundown, Hana knew. Hana knew that she needed to get to the emergency transmitter, but if that was the case, then she would need a way down. Her MEKA's legs wouldn't survive the impact, but her boosters were at 75% capacity, but there were also her *teammates* and why did *she* have to be the only one *conscious*—

Her scanners screeched at her, cogently jolting her back into combat mode. She whirled to face what her scanners had detected, and her heart sunk at the sight of two battle-ready helicopters closing in on her position, the Talon insignia dashed across their sides.

She only had one fusion cannon active. Her defense matrix had taken a heavy blow and would need more time to charge, more time than she could buy. Her mech was only at half efficiency just standing. Her teammates were all unconscious, relying on her now to get them out alive. Her mind raced. She needed to do something.

The only things she had operational were her boosters, her light pistol, one fusion cannon, and her self-destruct; but she couldn't sacrifice her mech to self-destruct and trust that a new one would arrive before she was blown to bits. She was out of options, and out of time. Hana was panicking. Frozen.

"D.Va," she screamed, desperate. "D.Va, help me!"

No response.

In the distance, machine guns roared to life, ripping through the air with vigor, splattering bullets in a halo around her.

She needed a plan. She needed time. She needed back-up.

A plan darted through her thoughts. She grasped it, desperately, flitting through the details, and—

She was sorry. She was so, so sorry it had to be like this.

Hana tucked her teammates behind one of the crushed boulders and covered them up with the fragments of the shattered cliffside, trusting that they wouldn't wake up before help arrived.

"I'm sorry," she whispered, and she was terrified, but she knew what she needed to do. She hoped they would forgive her, someday.

Ring. It was deafening, now.

"D.Va...?" a voice croaked from the pile of rubble. McCree. Hana dug her teeth into her bottom lip. She couldn't look back now. If she did, then she wouldn't be able to do what she needed to do.

"Don't worry," she choked out over the lump forming in her throat. "You'll live. I'm gonna go get you some help, okay?"

Her laugh strangled her, and her voice cracked. "This is fucked. This is all *fucked*. I was so close. I was *so* close to getting better. And then *this* happened, and now I have to fix it. It's all *fucked*, Jesse."

Her hands trembled on her controls. "I'm sorry. Don't die."

"Now hold on—"

Her mech tipped over the edge of the ledge. It was a long, long way down.

Intense, burning pain. But she was almost there— just a little bit further.

Hana checked her vitals on a whim, in a rare moment of calm amongst the chaos.

She had a cut on her right eyelid, and the blood had sealed her eye shut, impairing a good half of her vision. The eye beneath was likely damaged, too. It'd been a fragment of her shattered windshield, when she'd taken one too many hits to the bulletproof glass. There was a broken blood vessel in her other eye, tinting everything else in her limited field of vision splotched and red. There were two bullets lodged inside of her left thigh, burning with searing pain. She felt them vividly whenever she moved. Deeper they bit into her muscles. The small wounds were likely already infected, white-hot as they were.

Sand had clustered in her blood-clotted nose, and the small grains had begun a relentless attack on

her already sore lungs. Each breath was now a painful rasp: hoarse, brittle. She could feel the blood crawl up her throat before she inhaled, and she tasted it on the back of her tongue whenever she exhaled.

Her left arm was fractured in multiple places along the forearm, and she was pretty sure that some pieces of the bone had broken through the skin, but she wasn't entirely sure. The tendon connecting the arm to her shoulder had been severed and the deep cut was now streaming blood down the arm's underside, all the way down to her knuckles. She couldn't feel that arm—which was probably for the best. It was sagged against her controls, bent at an unnatural angle, unmoving, and she almost wished it was gone entirely because it was only dragging her down at this point.

Her right leg was broken at the knee, and a shard of metal from her mech had been shoved through it, preventing her from moving it in any direction that didn't hurt. The metal was cold, and yet the wound burned with a baleful passion. It made the whole limb feel disconnected. It squelched and bubbled and leaked, and it *hurt*. The limb throbbed with every pulse of her unsteady heart, and it gushed and spilled the thick, red substance over the interior of her mech. From it, she was losing blood. Quickly so.

But that wasn't even the worst of it.

There was another, larger slab of metal protruding upwards, just above her diaphragm, and into her left lung, causing her to sputter out blood every time she breathed. The metal pierces through her ribcage, sitting still and black in the center of her chest, stalling the flow of blood. God, it hurt. It hurt more than any pain she had ever known; arid and thrill with every wheezing breath. When she moved, her ribs crackled and rubbed together like misplaced puzzle pieces, and she would further lose feeling in the bottom half of her prone form.

And then there was her mech.

Her mech was far past critical, and she didn't know *how* it was still moving, but she was glad it could.

A large piece of the backside of the mech had been ripped off by a fourth mortar, and now the sun scorched down across her aching spine. The right side of her capsule was smashed, crushing everything on that side of the interior against her, metal digging into her flight suit, and beyond that, her skin. Rather than pink, her MEKA had turned red and black from burn marks and singed blood. It was probably on fire, too, considering how hot and sticky her skin felt. Perhaps she was bathed in blood, and that's why everything was red. It filled her with a certain type of desperation, the likes of which she had never before felt.

Her booster fuel was only at 4% capacity and it wasn't charging. Her remaining fusion cannon had taken a hard hit, and now fired sporadically rather than in concentrated bursts. *At least it can still fire*, she thought bitterly, gnashing her teeth and hating the taste of copper and salt that blossomed on her tongue. Her light pistol was missing, having been blasted out of her hand by a point-blank sniper. She hadn't had enough time to search for it, and the sand had probably buried it by now.

But she was almost there, just a few more steps.

She couldn't see straight, couldn't walk straight, and her mech's feet were dragging through the sand and the distance was growing shorter and shorter.

Ten meters. Five. Three.

A mercenary rose from the dust with a howl, bleeding from the leg, but she gunned them down

before they could do more than stand.

Two meters.

Her mech crumpled, its damaged legs finally failing to support it any longer. She hit eject, and her cockpit loosened around her chest with a pathetic wheeze of air, but she was still pinned inside by multiple pieces of her capsule. It didn't matter. She was there, anyways.

Hana reached out with her relatively uninjured right arm to fumble for the emergency transmitter. It gave a beep, and some part of her sailed to the moon. But then, of course, she realized that she needed to talk, and that piece of her slammed back into her gut. She choked on it a little.

"...D-D.Va to Fallback... please... please respond," she said at last, trying to forcing herself to sound composed over the sticky blood coating her tongue and the roof of her mouth, and ultimately failing.

"Fallback to D.Va, we hear you loud and clear. What's your status?"

It was Winston.

"N-Negative outcome, Fallback. S-S-Symmetra, G-Genji, a-and McCree are down, a-and all comms systems were t-taken out. It was an ambush."

Her voice was shaking of its own volition. Violently so. She could hardly make herself coherent over the shudders that now racked her body. It was the shock. She had lost too much blood, and she was going into hypovolemic shock. She likely only had a few minutes left to live. Knowing that made it no more pleasant a thought.

The gorilla swore on the other end, said something to someone else that she assumed was with him, and then returned to the mic.

"Understood, D.Va. What are their conditions?"

"G-Genji and Symmetra are unconscious, Fallback. M-McCree might be a-awake."

She only had a few minutes left. That wasn't enough time. And it hurt—the adrenaline was doing a marvelous job at keeping her from feeling most of the damage done to her body, but it wasn't nearly enough to make her numb. She was suffering. The cold bliss of death would be a blessing.

"S-Symmetra is in the w-worst condition," she said.

"Location?"

"Vantage p-point Origin," she said, and then she physically backed away from the communicator so that she could breathe more easily. The air was too hot, the situation too familiar to the shower room incident for all the wrong reasons.

The speaker on the other end crackled and then a more feminine, more worried tone came through the comm.

"What's your status, D.Va?"

It was Mercy. Her open eye burned. She couldn't lie to *her*, not after everything they'd been through.

"M-My mech has been c-compromised."

She swallowed hard, away from the speaker. It was difficult to keep her voice calm. She wanted to cry.

"I t-took a hard hit. I-I'll live. I-I'm just... just a b-bit shaken."

Mercy inhaled quickly. *"Understood. We are en-route to your location with transport."*

"P-please—" she cut herself off, realizing she sounded far too desperate, and cleared her throat. She ignored the blood dribbling down her chin in rivulets. "P-please help Symmetra, f-first."

Because there was a very high chance that Symmetra would be in a coma if not treated by the nano-tech the Caduceus staff provided.

There was a long pause on the other end. Long enough to send Hana into a panic.

"S-She's critical, Mercy," she rushed, and her voice cracked because this facade hurt too much, and technically she was critical too, but she was trying to be a little bit heroic because it was the least she could do to thank Satya for all she'd done.

Another pause.

"Give me the details on her injuries."

Hana exhaled, the breath rushing out of her in a pathetic wheeze.

"D-Deep gash in her right temple. Really deep," she said. It was getting hard to focus. "Severe... severe burns across back. Her left arm's gone, and there's possibly a puncture beneath her ribs. T-those are—" Ah, damn, she choked, coughs spluttering from her lips in messy, wet waves. She had been doing so well. "—those are the big ones."

"...D.Va? D.Va, Liebling, are you alright?"

The tears fell easily from her open eye, snot dripping from her nose in a mixture of mucus and blood.

"P-Peachy, Ziegler. J-Just get here quickly."

She ended the transmission there as her body fell into shuddering sobs. Her natural depressants were fading in effect, pain surging through her body at every heaving breath. She was likely going into shock, now that she thought about it.

"I-I'm sorry," she gasped, and then coughed red into the sand pressed against the side of her face. Her mech was heavy on her back— too heavy.

She was tired. She was so, so tired. Darkness was creeping in at the edges of her vision.

Hana blinked slowly, lazily, each rasping breath now a silent rattle. The tears dripped haphazardly, her sobs having faded into quiet shudders. It was the closest she'd come to death and she wondered if maybe she would die the next time she closed her eyes.

No, she couldn't die yet. She was too young. She had a whole life left unfulfilled ahead of her.

Hana's fingers fumbled for her emergency protocall, a cooperative effort between Mercy and Mei, and stabbed the needle into her arm once she had a hold of it.

It was a stoppage drug. It was supposed to freeze her body in a temporary state of cryostasis,

preserving her life for a limited time. It would slow her heartbeat, apparently, and therefore stall the loss of blood. It was also shot full of alkali fluids that would prevent her from dying of shock. Mei had called it a cryo-anesthetic, she remembered. Everyone had been given one. Supposedly, it would slow her death for a few more minutes. She just needed to buy time. She didn't want to die, even if it was what she got for being so reckless, even after she had craved death for so long.

Time seemed to slow as she felt the cryo-anesthetic run like liquid ice through her veins. She wondered how many minutes passed, how many seconds, or if any time was passing at all. The yellow sand and blood was briefly replaced by the image of a set of identical gravestones.

"...are you proud of me now, Mom, Dad?" she murmured, sardonic, quiet Korean lost to the wind, closing her eye and letting the cold wash over her.

A third gravestone began to formulate in the darkness. Large, made of jet black onyx and engraved with with gold. It was surrounded by beautiful flowers. Carnations, lilies, orchids, and honeysuckle. A name was formulating, being engraved into the heavy stone by an unseen quill. She could almost read it, the letters being stenciled in elegant cursive. Hana was just beginning to make out a name, short and powerful and *bright*—

Something blared angrily at her, an incoming message, jolting her from her peace. The gravestone vanished, and suddenly she was back in the Taklamakan desert. The emergency transmitter was blinking, loud and incessant. She dragged her sluggish hand across the sand to press it.

It gave a small beep, an indication that she was supposed to talk, but Hana couldn't speak. She was hardly conscious.

She was saved by a crackling voice from the other end.

"D.Va, we're almost there. I have clear readings on Symmetra, McCree, and Genji, but your tag just cut off. I don't know where you are anymore. What is your condition? Where are you?"

The voice sounded like her mother's, but her mother was dead. Hana was confused. Who was talking to her, then?

Ah, she needed to reply. What did she need to reply to? Her condition? She had an answer, then.

"I-I lied," she choked out, coughing hard.

"...What?"

A small grin cracked on her face, through the blood and the tears, frail and dry. "I— I'm sorry, Angela. I-I messed up a little. D-don't be mad," she wheezed, closing her remaining eye.

"You're... you're sorry? You lied? D.Va, what do you— mein Gott. Tracer, we need to get there now. D.Va, talk to me. You need to stay awake, honey. What happened to you? Where are you hurt?"

Everything moved in slow motion. A light, hot breeze rustled the sand. An eerie silence seemed to have overtaken the desert. Before, it was filled to the brim with noise, and now, it was dormant and still. Almost as if it was holding its breath.

"D.Va, honey, you need to respond." The woman's voice was forcibly calm, but somehow simultaneously filled with fear; Hana didn't like hearing her scared. No, she didn't like how scared this woman sounded at all.

"I'm here," Hana rasped. Her tongue felt like cement, and the words came out thick and slow like

tar.

"Oh, thank god. Where are you? How do you feel?"

Hana looked around. She'd lost feeling in her fingers and her toes, and she couldn't move her left arm.

"I..." she said, and everything felt and sounded clumsy and languid. "I'm stuck." Something dripped from her mouth like the stringy, slurred sentences she tried in vain to rasp.

It was cold. Her body was cold but she was surrounded by such intense heat. The world was on fire. Everything she knew was made of copper and algid flames.

"I can't feel... anything," she mumbled, and the hot liquid was bleeding down her throat. She wished she could choke it out but she was far too tired and far too senseless to do anything. "Nothing."

"Where are you stuck, Liebling?" The woman sounded even more terrified now.

"Hmmm...." Hana hummed, lazy. "It's hot here. S'all yellow 'n red. Can't breathe much." And she couldn't breathe. Whenever she tried, it seemed to rush out of her. That was a problem, too. Humans needed air to breathe.

Her brows furrowed as something came to mind.

"I think I got shot?" The assumption came out sounding more like a question.

The woman swore loudly. *"Where? Where did you get shot?"* The woman's voice was like thunder in her ears. She didn't like it.

Hana looked around again at all the bloodied sand filling her vision.

"Everywhere," she croaked.

A new voice popped on, faint. Male. Panicked. Heavily accented.

"She went over the edge of the cliff," the unknown man said. *"I watched 'er. She tipped right over. She's talkin' to ya from the emergency transmitter. That's where she is."*

The woman came back on.

"D.Va, darling, you've got to stay awake for a little while longer," she said. Her voice grew faint, momentarily, but Hana could still make out the words. *"Tracer, 76 can take over the controls. Get ready to get in there."*

She returned shortly, sounding breathless and afraid.

"We're coming to get you now. Stay awake."

"Okay," Hana said, her remaining eye sliding shut. Her ears were starting to ring painfully.

A sigh rattled her chest after a moment.

"I'm tired," she breathed, and her finger slipped off of the button of the transmitter before the woman on the other end could respond.

It would have been quiet, but her ears were filled with that horrible ringing sound. It pressed down

on her from all directions, intrusive. She just wanted to sleep.

There was a loud whirring noise nearby. It was thunderous, louder than the ringing, and it shook her body.

Footsteps rushed across the sand towards her— a brighter yellow, and a brilliant blue, both colors blurred together incomprehensibly.

"O-oh God, D.Va— oh my god. Please don't be dead. H-hang on, luv, we'll get you out, just, ah — *Mercy! Mercy, I've got 'er!*"

She couldn't feel her body. Her heartbeat was loud and slow— the ringing in her ears was almost unbearable.

She heard someone call her name— "*Hana? Hana, can you hear me?*" —and then...

...and then everything faded.

Chapter End Notes

Do I regret anything? No? Did you see that coming? Probably? Am I still crying? Absolutely?

But don't worry. That's was the brunt of it. Things are downhill from here with a few bumps in the road.

FYI: I am not a health expert??? at all??? Don't expect any of this to be accurate.

Thank you for all the responses. It means a lot, and I do take into consideration all of your suggestions and whatnot.

See you in the next chapter.

- Ace.

rinse and repeat

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

She woke up, once.

Well, she was awake, but she wasn't. It was a strange feeling. She was aware of what was happening around her, and what was happening *to* her, but it also felt like she was dreaming. A never-ending, pitch black dream, and she was floating aimlessly in the dark, but she was also grounded, gravity crushing against her, making her feel small. It was an odd sensation, overall.

She couldn't open her eyes.

There were voices around her, worried, but unintelligible. She couldn't make out any words, much less recognize any of the speakers. It was gibberish, muffled, as if she were standing behind some dark curtain, obscuring her from their view. *Perhaps it's a body bag*, she thought serenely, feeling cold and insouciant. So what if she couldn't see. What was the point of sight if she would never open her eyes again?

She also couldn't move.

Breathing was hard, and she wanted to breathe quickly, but she couldn't. Everything about her was mechanical and slow. She always felt like she was suffocating, but she wasn't, that much she knew. That was the extent of the awareness of her bodily functions. The most she knew was the she was cold, she couldn't breathe, and there was pain. A pain so unbearable her heart skipped a few beats when it hit her, and she forgot to breathe entirely for a few seconds, yet she made no sound. She wanted to scream, but she couldn't, her voice was lodged in her throat like a stone. That's when the phlegmatic indifference had set in.

That didn't stop her from wondering.

She wondered where she was—even though she knew the exact coordinates by heart. The latitudinal and longitudinal numbers were so familiar, and yet she couldn't grasp them. All rational thought was just beyond the extent of her memory.

She wondered if she was dreaming. She knew she wasn't, but it was a more relaxing thought. More relaxing than the thought of being dead. And she did wonder if she was dead. She wondered if she'd actually bled out, if the cryo-anesthetic hadn't lasted long enough. Had she finally gone too far? Had she finally reached the final boss, and then failed at the very last second? That, she didn't know, but it was terrifying. A game over with no restarts.

She wondered if she would get a monument, and what they would write on her gravestone—if they'd call her a child then, too. Who would visit her? Who was she to them? She couldn't grasp the answer but it was close, it was so close.

Oh, the voices were clearing now. Barely. They were coming into focus. The curtain was drawing back, though it was still dark. Sound brushed against her ears, a welcome relief from the onerous quietude.

"...lood loss. Lúcio, I need you stabilize her. Hook up the IV to her right arm. Mei, we need to get the cryo-anesthetic out of her system. It's preventing the fresh blood from assimilating with her bloodstream."

"Got it."

"...Angela, there's a very slim chance she'll make it out alive. And if she does live, what's to say that she'll wake up?"

...What? No, no, that wasn't what she wanted to hear. Not what she needed. She needed reasons to live, not this uncertainty.

"We may have lost her already."

No, she was right there. She could hear them. She was *there*. They couldn't leave her behind. They wouldn't, right?

"I'm not giving up on her, Winston. She's too young to die. I'll do whatever it takes to bring her back. I can't work miracles, but for her, I'm sure as hell going to make one."

Cold fear washed over her in waves. It was uncomfortable, and it was painful. Her heartbeat felt irregular. *Th-th-thump. Th-thump. Th-thump. Skip. Th-thump.*

There was a pinching sensation in her right arm. A cold snake slithered inside her, and then something hot and thick was coursing throughout her circulatory system. She felt violated; she wanted to scream; her throat, still, was petrified.

The voices were fading.

Come back, she willed. Don't leave me here. I'm right here, don't leave me behind.

Her consciousness was hazy, and all thoughts were becoming null. Where was she? What was happening to her? Why was she there? She hadn't been able to remember much in the darkness, but now it came to her in puzzling bursts that she couldn't make sense of because they were all disconnected. She remembered Kashgar, and the Taklamakan Desert. She remembered a hot sun and fire and metal and *pain*. She remembered a battlefield, a massacre, and three bloody bodies filling her with fiery rage. Broken voices, shattered by the transmitter between them. Exhaustion. Bloodstained sand.

She remembered the South Korean coast, in the dead of winter, all ice and frozen water and a blizzard in the air. She remembered the cold, so intense she couldn't feel her cheeks. She remembered colossal, stomping feet and a smirk plastered on her face. She remembered a team. Once thirty, now thirteen. Their names came to her, one by one. Yeong-Suk, Sung-Ho, Hye, Nari, Iseul, Gyeong, Dae-Jung, Jason, Yu-Ri, Bora, Areum, and Han-Bin. There used to be more, but all she remembered were the shapes of their headstones, not their names.

She remembered Kim, and her plum-colored hair and her vanilla-glossed lips and her hands that were so, so soft, too soft for a soldier. She remembered whispered reassurances in empty hallways, quiet kisses in the blue dark of the broom closet, and watching a violet mech plunge from the sky like a stone. She remembered approaching the wreckage and feeling something in her heart waver, falter, and shatter.

She remembered the day the giant Omnic crashed into the ocean for the last time on their nineteenth strike against it; the elation and the equal and overwhelming exhaustion that she felt. She remembered the day she came home to find that home was in ruins. She remembered the day she lost herself to violence in whole.

She remembered a fear. A fear of fulgent lights and obstreperous crowds. And that smirk, plastered on her face once again. Over and over and over again. She remembered a little white rabbit with little pink eyes surrounded by big, yellow-eyed wolves. She remembered a burden,

and a title— 'hero,' and how she heard it more as 'martyr.'

Other than that, it was a dark blur.

In this state of foggy awareness, she knew that waking up was taking too long. She knew that she needed to wake up, but it was hard to even retain conscious thought. Minutes passed, or was it seconds? Days? Hours? Everything was overwhelming, so she forced herself to be lost in the darkness once more, and hated how it felt entirely cold this time— a chill that was all too familiar. It was comforting, almost, and she wanted to get lost in it.

She hated how her life flashed before her eyes, slow and steady. It wasn't supposed to do that yet. She just wanted to sleep.

"Idiot, you're already asleep."

D.Va.

The two of them were on an infinite white plain. It was cold. Perhaps it was snowing.

"Where were you? I needed you," Hana whispered, snow on her lashes and burying her feet, her breath frozen in the air.

"I told you you would get yourself killed," D.Va retorted, dark eyes glinting dangerously.

Hana's face burned in shame. "I'm sorry."

"They wouldn't be proud of you. You are weak."

"I know."

"Do you think you're a hero?" D.Va asked, face scrunched in scrutiny.

"No," Hana said.

D.Va laughed. It was a cruel sound. "Good."

"What did I do wrong?" she asked in a whimper.

D.Va shrugged, and a somber look crossed her face. "Exactly what I did."

Hana was confused. "What did you do?"

D.Va's tight-lipped smile looked pained for a moment.

"You tried to be a hero. You can't be a hero when you're a murderer, too. You can't be strong if you're weak."

That logic sounded flawed. All heroes were murderers, to some extent. And how can you be strong and weak at the same time? It wasn't possible.

"Why?"

D.Va uncrossed her arms at last and showed Hana her hands. They were blood red up to the

elbows.

"Because you're trying to get better," the facade said. "You're pretending that you haven't done horrible things, but you have. Stop trying to be heroic— just accept it. You can't possibly atone for what you've done. Not by throwing your own life away and hoping it'll make up for the hundreds you've murdered. Your life isn't enough to make up for the lives of the people you've killed— it isn't worth as much. You aren't strong like that. That's weakness."

Hana scowled. "I save lives when I kill. That makes up for it."

D.Va laughed sourly and crossed her arms again. "Let me tell you something." The facade took a step closer, eyes narrowed and unfriendly.

"Here's the thing about murderers— they never stop. They may stop killing, but that doesn't mean that they haven't killed already, or that the desire fades entirely. Their hands will never be clean once soiled. You think you save lives when you kill? Think again!"

D.Va turned away. "Use your head, Hana. Those people you save? They die. If you save them once, that isn't heroics. That's pride, and it's for glory. You're doing it for yourself, not for them. You're only a hero when you protect them."

The facade huffed.

"But what do I know? I'm no hero. I'm a mask. You made me to protect yourself, you selfish fucking brat."

Hana's fists clenched. "By your standards, then, wouldn't that make you a hero? Neither of us are heroes, D.Va. Get that out of your head. We're bad people. We've done some fucked up things. We know that, now, but at least I'm trying to make up for it!"

D.Va rounded on her, dark eyes blazing. "You're missing the point!" she roared. "Listen to the words I'm saying, Hana! Stop trying to get better— it's too late! You're always too late!"

The flat expanse went very quiet. The snow in the air hung suspended, frozen in time. D.Va's shoulders sank, fury fading quickly into embers. The snow fell.

"It's too late for us. We can't do anything right. We learned that the hard way, didn't we?" The facade croaked, and then laughed— her laugh was the most sad thing Hana had ever heard.

D.Va looked up, and it was like Hana was staring into a mirror. D.Va shouldn't look so tired or aged— D.Va needed to be young and peppy, not like... like Hana.

"You made me to protect you," D.Va said, quietly. "But if you keep trying to fix what you can't possibly make up for, I can't do anything."

"I want to get better," Hana replied, equally hushed. "I'm doing what I can."

"You won't heal. It's killing me."

"I want to try, anyways."

"It isn't worth it."

"You forget how stubborn I am."

D.Va deflated, smile taking on a stressed, strained undertone. "I guess I do."

Another moment of silence.

"Are we going to die?" Hana asked.

D.Va shrugged. "Who knows."

"I don't want to die."

Hana hated the woebegone smile that broke through D.Va's smirk, and hated the way the facade's brightness flickered for a moment, as if it would disappear entirely.

"That makes one of us."

The cold began seeping through her body, and she could only focus on it— not the memories, not D.Va —and its merciless chill. She felt like she was falling.

Through the cold dark came a voice—

"Heroes never die."

But she wasn't a hero, was she?

Waking up was disorienting, and it was slow.

Hana cracked open her eyes— or, more accurately, her eye. She could only open one. That was the first thing she noticed.

The second thing she noticed was that the lights in the room were off, making everything all the more dark. The third thing she noticed was the faint feeling of the mask over her nose and mouth, and her quiet, rasping breaths. It made her face feel hot, and wet, but she knew her lips were very much dry because she could feel them cracking even without moving them.

The fourth thing she noticed was that she could hear a heart monitor, slow and steady. It was annoying, but there was nothing she could do about it. Her body felt stiff, plastic, and her nose was filled with the dizzying scent of antiseptics. She had never been in a hospital before for her own injuries, she thought, bleary-eyed. Even if where she was wasn't a hospital, if it was instead the medical bay, it was the first thing she could think of to call it, because what she could see reminded her very distinctly of an operating room.

And it... it was a little disappointing.

She had always been so careful, so cautious, so that she wouldn't get excess worry from both her teammates and her fans if she slipped up. Luckily, she hadn't been streaming *that* particular mission, otherwise the situation would be *much* worse, but it was still disheartening.

Ah, and there went her mood. That hollow feeling was branching from her stomach like an infestation. She needed Angela. She needed not to be alone right now, before her mind decided to venture all the dark corners. The walls reminded her of Watchpoint: Gibraltar, from what she could see. She decided to try something. She was desperate— what was there not to try?

"A-Athena," she wheezed through the plastic of her mask, and was surprised at how weak she

sounded, how quickly the air rushed out of her, too quickly to speak. She hadn't even formulated words; it had just been a pathetic puff of air.

But she wasn't famous for giving up. To give up was to lose, and failure was never an option. She was known for winning, infamous for it. So, adamantly, she tried again. It was the most she could do.

"Athena."

Still, her voice was no more than a twisted exhale. She scowled beneath her mask, and shifted her positioning to try to see if it would help project her voice a little better.

"Athe—"

She screamed.

Sitting up was a mistake.

It was mind-blowing— the staggering degree of how much she *felt*, how much the pain stole the breath from her injured lungs, and how much she could suffer from the simple shifting of her body into what seemed like a more comfortable position at the time. She could feel every vein of blood pulsing from her tongue to her toes as her heart beat, pushing against her skin with brio. Fast, panicked, and gaining in speed the more and more awake she became, and the more she realized the true depth of her injuries.

She could feel the vapor of her hot breath against her dry lips. She could feel the paranoia rising against the backs of her eyes, ready to spill at any given time.

And *fuck*, what the *hell* had she done to her lung?

Moving hurt too much, so she couldn't get a good look of what the wound looked like, but she had a crystal clear idea. She remembered the slab of metal, and its size and its roughness, and how cold it had felt inside of her, slick with her blood, and how whenever she had tried to move it—

Hana shuddered, and then coughed, and then cried out in pain. Everything she did caused excruciating torment, it seemed, but she was desperate, and the sense of desperation overwhelmed the sense of pain.

Again, she attempted again to sit up, but gagged on the bile that rose in her throat at the furious burn that tore through her fresh, unhealed wounds. She bit into her tongue deeply, screaming through her clenched, grit teeth, and fell back into her pillows to relieve herself of the torturous sensation.

Sweat was beading on her forehead from exertion. She was dizzy— and she never learned, did she? — so she tried again, her limbs feeling leaden, infected with pain enough to shatter her persona's grandeur. Tears were dammed up behind her hot, sere eyes, and she felt weak and queasy when she finally managed to sit upright, leaning heavily against the headboard.

Her eye had begun to adjust, though her field of vision was now blurred from unshed tears. At least she could see somewhat better, she supposed.

It appeared that she was alone in the darkened medical bay. Angela wasn't slumped at her desk, as per usual. In fact, Angela wasn't anywhere. The entire room was unnaturally vacant. All that she could see was antiseptic and bare.

But she didn't feel alone, which meant—

"I see you are awake, Ms. Song." Athena's gentle, soothing voice resonated quietly over the speakers.

—Athena.

She was a tad annoyed that Athena had just now noticed that she was awake, but she didn't have the energy to hold on to that anger, so she just made an incoherent noise of confirmation.

The AI was undeterred. "Very well. I shall alert Dr. Ziegler."

She tore off the oxygen mask with a sharp inhale, and fumbled blindly for a moment before ripping the IVs out of her arm. The vertigo hit hard, but she pushed through it.

"Ms. Song, be advised, you are not in optimal state to be moving around—"

Hana swung her legs over the side of the bed with a pained grunt and a hiss through her teeth. She took note of the heavy feeling of a cast on her right leg, and elected to ignore it. Her left arm was in a tight sling across her chest, so she braced her remaining hand against the bed's mattress.

Athena was there, again, overhead. "Ms. Song, you were critically injured during your last mission and your body still needs time to heal. Might I suggest—"

"Shut up," she grit out, reaching for the nearby metal chair and adjusting her feet.

The AI quickly went silent.

Sucking in a breath, Hana tightened her hold on the chair and yanked herself onto her feet. Whoa, she could actually stand. Nice.

There was a fleeting moment of victory, and a small grin appeared on her face, but bliss was quickly replaced with panic, and then by sheer anguish as her mind caught up with the state of her body and reacted accordingly. Again, a scream tore its way up her throat and she hunched over instinctively to relieve the stress of standing from her wound, which only ended up putting more pressure on it, and she heard something rip. White spots sparked across her vision. The world began to tilt.

Hana's knees buckled— from the pain, the vertigo, or the rush of raw frustration, she was unsure. She only managed to get out half of a rushed *'oh fuck,'* before her descent came to abrupt and gentle stop.

Hana blinked, her free hand feeling around helplessly because it was still dark and her face was full of soft, knit fabric.

There was a tired sigh from her rescuer, and Hana's heart lurched at the sound. She bit the inside of her cheek, eyes burning with shame.

Angela.

She buried her face in the fabric of the navy blue sweater, intent on not looking up so that she wouldn't have to see the doctor's face.

"You've only been awake for two minutes and you've already reopened seven of your wounds," Angela sighed, running her fingers through the younger woman's hair.

Hana didn't reply, because she still had her pride and because she was also D.Va, so she still had to keep up some sort of appearance, even though the regret was eating at her like acid. The hand

running through her hair was soothing, quelling the acidic burn of penitence, but she was persistently ashamed, so her face did not move from the blonde's sweater.

"Hana."

Angela sounded so hushed, so tired. Hana knew it was her fault and her expression twisted into one of guilt at the realization.

"Hana, you barely made it out of that one alive. You aren't ready to be moving around yet, and—" there was a pause. Hana assumed the doctor was pursing her lips.

"You removed your IVs."

Hana shut her eye quickly, a lump in her throat forming.

There were a lot of things she wanted to say— she wanted to apologize, to make some sort of quip, to snap, to lighten the mood—but she said none of them.

"Satya?" she mumbled over the lump in her throat, the tear in her lung, and through the fabric of Angela's sweater.

The hand in her hair began to move again. She felt herself being lowered onto the ground, until they were both kneeling.

"Fully healed," the doctor said. "She visits you, sometimes. She sits in that chair there for hours until Mei and Aleksandra come to drag her to bed. She feels guilty."

The blonde then smiled— a small, wan smile. "Jesse and Genji, too. They were both very worried; they insisted on a debt. You can now call a favor from them at any time. They practically begged me to relay as much to you if you— as soon as you woke up."

Hana caught the slip, and her heart stuttered pathetically.

"How long was I out?" she asked, removing her face from the doctor's sweater with a wince, and meeting the other's even blue gaze.

Angela was quick to steady her, brows knitting together. "Twelve days. I'm surprised it was only that long, though."

The blonde looked away with another sigh.

"We came really, really close to losing you in the surgery. You were biologically dead for six seconds," she murmured. "We weren't sure if you would wake up at all."

So, she *had* died. Her stomach flopped. That was something to fret over another time.

"But I did it," Hana grunted, falling forward into the doctor and nestling into the sweater's soft fabric once more.

"Yes, you did."

There was a pause.

"Jack would like to speak with you as soon as you are stable," Angela said after a rather prolonged moment.

Hana's heart staggered. "Are you kicking me off the team?"

Angela, for her part, huffed and hooked her arms beneath the smaller woman, lifting her off of the ground with a strength Hana hadn't known the doctor possessed.

"No. Absolutely not. If that's what Jack is thinking of doing, I'll give him a piece of my mind."

She was set down gently on the medical bed and tucked beneath the covers. Hana felt dizzy, a little delirious, but all she could think about was if this was what having a mom was like, an actual mother, and not the neglectful woman that she'd been given.

Angela wandered off, farther than she could see, which was troubling, but she could still hear the doctor muttering to herself. She hadn't left. That was good. Hana didn't want to be alone, not with the darkness swarming just beyond the grasp of sleep.

She was just beginning to doze off when Angela returned, and she was about to speak but the doctor brushed past her, making a bee-line towards the discarded IVs. Hana scowled, but held her tongue. She was in no position to complain. She didn't even really have a right to be angry at all.

There was a sharp, brief pain in her right forearm, and then another, and the vertigo began to fade moments later. Her IVs had been replaced. Discreetly, she sighed in relief.

It hit her then how exhausted she was, and how she was still in pain, and that she should probably sleep, but she *really* didn't want to. Not yet. Her dreams would attack her.

"Ziegs?" she called out.

Angela entered her restricted vision, looking simultaneously worried, tired, and perplexed. Hana noticed then the dark circles beneath the doctor's eyes.

Hana shook herself, and opened her mouth.

"Can you..."

The words trailed off, lost on her tongue. She knew what she wanted to say, but it was a childish wish, and would it even be okay to ask for something like this, when everything she had done—

"What do you need, *Liebling*?" Angela murmured, stroking the younger woman's bangs away from her face.

Hana choked up a little bit, and the question tore itself from her lungs with a rush of air.

"Can you stay? I don't want to be alone right now."

Hana found she couldn't hold that tender gaze for very long, or stand the sight of the genuine smile that graced the doctor's face without wanting to cry.

It was nice to be part of a family, she discovered, past the fear. And though she hated being called a child, she found that, in this instance, she didn't mind the title so much.

D.Va shook her head with a sigh.

"You're really set on this, aren't you?"

Hana smiled, lopsided.

"I guess so."

It had been three days. Three very painful, very uneventful days, Angela had forbidden her from leaving the medical bay, as well as the general vicinity of her IV stand, so the majority of her days were spent laying in bed streaming games from her laptop. It wasn't boring, but it wasn't very entertaining, either, not to mention playing games one-handed was incredibly difficult.

She hadn't had many visitors, despite what Angela had said. The doctor was probably limiting them, now that Hana was awake. So far, Hana had only actually been visited by Winston, Jack, and Fareeha. Angela was a constant presence, so she didn't count as a visitor. In Hana's opinion, at least.

But it wasn't bad.

Her meals were varied, for which she was very grateful. It was quite obvious and rather endearing that the others were trying to outmatch each other by cooking her dishes from their particular home countries. It made her feel spoiled, but not in the overzealous celebrity way that she was accustomed to— in the warm, fuzzy, *familial* sort of way that she was still trying to figure out.

Lena had made her a wonderful breakfast platter in the rough shape of a rabbit that morning. Aleksandra had made her a thick, savory soup the first day of her awakening. Torbjörn had made her a Swedish princess cake one night. There were others, too, but she could only remember their tastes and not their names.

On another note, the healing process was going well. Angela said that she was about two days away from being able to leave the medical bay, but it would be a good week after that with extensive care from nanotechnology before she could leave the base safely.

Jack had talked to her the other day, too, bringing a gift of salted watermelon. He told her that her mission frequency would now be limited, and that Torbjörn and Satya would be making her a new flight suit with better protection and a resistance to her self-destruct mode's explosion. He also told her not to make him worry like that again, that he'd already lost enough comrades to war. Hana (D.Va) had yelled at him, telling him that he had no right to tell her what to do, she was a higher rank than him, anyways. Jack was adamant in his position, but so was she, and they parted ways without settling the matter whatsoever.

She was getting better at connecting, despite that, she thought. It still made her uneasy, but she was trying, and Angela was helping her overcome the memories. One step at a time,

Currently, however, the doctor had been whisked away by Fareeha for lunch break, and now she was alone. Her laptop was charging, leaving her with nothing to do except stare at the ceiling and wait for Angela's return.

Knock knock knock. She heard the door slide open, which was strange, because Angela had only left several minutes ago— why would she be back so soon? She scooted up the headboard into a half-sit, and squinted until she recognized the figure lingering in the doorway.

"Genji?"

His mask was off; it startled her at first— what, with his spring green hair and scarred cheeks that she had never before seen. He was wearing a loose green tank top and track pants. She could see

the faint glow of his armor beneath his clothes.

The cyborg nodded in greeting, and held up a bento box wrapped up neatly in a red and white checkered cloth.

"I brought lunch."

Hana's eyes lit up at the prospect of food. "Whose cooking?"

Genji took a seat in the metal chair beside her bed, unwrapping the box and opening it for her to see. "Mine," he said, setting the box down on the bedside and carefully helping her into a more comfortable sit before handing her her lunch. There was a pair of chopsticks inside, and she picked them up with her good hand.

"What's in it?"

Genji scooted closer, pointing at each section of the box and naming off the unfamiliar foods. "White rice, seared salmon, tamagoyaki, yukari, blanched broccoli, and tako tempura."

She didn't know what most of them were, but nodded in understanding regardless and began to eat. It was very good, and she told the anxious cyborg so, reveling in the way his posture relaxed at the praise.

"So, what brings you here? Here to wish me a speedy recovery, too?" she huffed halfheartedly over a piece of tamagoyaki. She'd gotten an infinitesimal amount of well-wishing cards from the Overwatch members, some excepted. She hadn't even read them all. Most of the time, she just slid them into the bedside wastebin, not even bothering to look past their cover. She would heal. She would live. That much was blatantly obvious, so she didn't really understand the point of sending her cards wishing her a speedy recovery. Was a card supposed to change anything?

"Evidently," the ninja laughed. "But not entirely. The South Korean government gave us a call. They would like to speak with you tonight at 2100 hours. I'm sure the others will be there, too. They didn't specify what about. We were hoping you would know."

Hana huffed, and winced a bit, rubbing at her injured lung with her good arm. "Well, shit." Because she didn't know, but it must be bad. Had they found out about her injury? Had Angela told them, after all?

"We can hope for the best," said Genji.

She scoffed and picked at her food moodily. It was hard for her to believe that the call would go well when she already knew the direction it would take, the words they would say. It would surely be a call she had heard many times before, if her guesses were correct. Hana guessed that it would be about an upcoming event she had to attend as D.Va, or something had happened to one of her old teammates and she had to speak at another funeral. She wasn't excited, and her mood declined the more and more she thought about it.

She decided to change the topic, lest her cheer not be wasted entirely.

"What's everyone else up to?"

Genji stole a piece of broccoli. She had half a mind to tuck her lunch closer to herself, half a mind to break his arm, her eyes narrowing at the ninja, who merely shrugged with faux innocence.

"Everyone's been pretty busy. Ms. Satya and Mr. Torbjörn have been working themselves to the bone. They're always in the hangar, tinkering away at that mech of yours. They don't often take

breaks, so when Angela is not busy with you, she makes sure they're eating well. It's rather amusing, watching her run around.

"Lots of missions have been popping up, which is why you have not had many direct visitors. We'll get back from one mission and have to immediately head off on another."

Hana winced. She didn't like hearing about missions, not when she couldn't go out on them.

Genji continued hesitantly, after giving her expression a once-over.

"Other than that, nothing particularly interesting has happened. Currently, everyone is back at base. Some of us will be gone on a mission later this afternoon."

And she understood. She really did. She said as much.

Genji smiled nervously—he didn't believe her; she didn't believe herself—and she ate in silence for a long few moments before he spoke again.

"...How are you feeling?"

Hana sighed, the bags beneath her eyes suddenly feeling much heavier. She was reminded just how tired she was, and how little sleep she had been getting all these years.

"I don't know," she said honestly, turning to look over the rest of the medical bay with weary malaise. "Tired, I suppose."

"Not sleeping well?"

She shook her head.

"When have I ever?"

That made the cyborg laugh. "I used to be a gamer myself. I understand the feeling."

Hana bit her tongue sharply. It occurred to her, suddenly, that he still thought she was D.Va, that the reason she couldn't sleep was because of games on a screen. D.Va wanted to scream at him, tell him how wrong he was, how he didn't understand anything, but Hana was far too tired to do anything.

Another pause. Genji looked up sharply and pressed his hand to his ear. "I must go."

"Do you really have to?" she asked, tilting her head with a tight smile.

"Yes," D.Va sneered. "Leave."

The ninja sighed again. "I'm afraid so."

She rolled a piece of tempura across the bottom of the box. "Come on, you can't leave me alone. It's so boring in here!" she carped, only partially kidding at that point, and only trying to lighten the unsuspecting heaviness of the goodbye.

D.Va tsked disapprovingly. "Why bother? His absence is a relief."

"For you, maybe," Hana shot back.

Genji merely laughed, patting her shoulder gently as he stood. "You'll live. You've made it this far, haven't you?"

He stood to leave.

"You will answer the call?"

"Of course," she responded. "It's not like I have a choice."

"Very well," he chuckled, making his way towards the open door. "I will see you after dinner, then."

"Yeah, see you." she called, mouth half-stuffed with rice. The door closed behind him automatically.

Hana leaned back with her bento, picking around at its contents with a small smile on her face.

Not five seconds passed before the door opened abruptly, and she looked up, rather startled, to see who had entered unannounced.

Her eyebrows skyrocketed as she watched the good doctor Angela Ziegler herself, and Captain Fareeha Amari stumble across the room in a mess of half-discarded clothes and wet kisses towards the doctor's office, until they made their way inside its premise and slammed the door shut.

The medical bay went uncomfortably quiet, then. She gaped at the office door, brows still quirked in disbelief.

Revolting. They're repulsive.

Hana closed her eyes quickly and sunk her molars into the inside of her cheek. Those weren't thoughts to think about one's teammates, she knew. And their relationship wasn't even any of her business— she had no right to feel what she did.

She *knew* that, she *knew*, but the feelings lingered, and suddenly she didn't feel very hungry anymore. The bento box was dumped into the trash, and she spat and her eyes burned and she cursed D.Va for being every bit the toxic influence that she was.

"I thought you said you were getting better," D.Va said, quirked a brow in that 'I-told-you-so' sort of way.

"Shut the fuck up," Hana snapped, turning away gruffly and storming away from those catlike brown eyes.

Twenty minutes later, a very disheveled, very shirtless Angela Ziegler exited her office, tying her hair up into her signature ponytail. Her lips were bruised, and there were red and purple marks along her exposed neck.

Hana looked away, anger hot in her chest. "I'd suggest a turtleneck," she called out, and her lung protested the action but she was too vexed to care.

The doctor sputtered, tripping over herself and whipping her head up in surprise. "Wh— Hana— you're still— you *saw*?"

Hana smiled, bitter, unable to stop herself. "I saw the beginning, listened to the middle, and witnessed the end. These walls aren't soundproof." A snort, maybe a sob. "You two are gross."

Hana wished she sounded more sarcastic and smug, rather than angry and honest, but she couldn't

help it. She was sick. Sick with raw, unadulterated jealousy, disgust, and an equal and overwhelming dose of dysphoria. Damn her jealousy, and her phobia, and her inability to connect properly. Her inability to share in others' happiness. She had no right.

Her fists balled in the sheets.

"I'm sorry," she said through clenched teeth. "I don't know why I'm so angry, or disgusted. Why? Why can't I be happy, too?"

A tentative hand brushed her shoulder, paused, and then settled there firmly when Hana did not flinch away.

"It's okay, *Liebling*," Angela murmured, giving her shoulder a light squeeze. "Your feelings are valid. It's okay to be angry, even if you do not know why. We will figure it out."

Hana knew, but she was a living flame, and the jealousy was her fuel.

"Try to get some sleep before dinner— it will help you heal more quickly."

Hana swiped furiously at her eyes and nodded. "Yeah, fine. I will sleep."

She should have known. With all that had happened to her, she should have known what a trap sleeping would be.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was a bit of a filler but that's alright right? It's just setting everything up for next chapter.

Next chapter we're gonna get some more backstory so I hope you're ready because you know by now that nothing in Hana's life is happy.

Your comments are wonderful. May Harembe live on forever within us.

- Ace.

snowfall

Chapter Notes

TW: panic attack, bad memories, etc.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It was their eleventh strike against the Colossal Omnic. Her team had been beaten down to twenty. She had lost ten teammates already, and a hell of a lot of firepower, but she had a good feeling about this mission.

This is the one, she thought with a smirk. This time, we'll kill it for sure.

A large, flat expanse of ice and rock awaited them, and in the distance, through the thick of the blizzard, she could see the blurred silhouette of the titanic Omnic. She could see its massive legs, could see the heavy turrets lining its underbelly, the ones that spewed fire and mortar at their defenses when they got too close. It was still intimidating, but she was undaunted. She had to be. She had to pretend, at the very least, that she wasn't terrified for her life every time she caught sight of its leaden shadow.

It was a familiar strategy: split into three groups; groups A and B would be the decoys, while group C went in for the kill. It hadn't failed her yet, so she strained its effectiveness once more as team leader. She called the shots, after all. And her teammates trusted her. They believed in her, in her charisma, in D.Va. It was almost pathetic, and more than a little crushing, to have the burden of their lives on her shoulders. She knew what was at stake. She did not, however, recognize the weight of the sacrifices she often made. Her officers called her a great commander. She called herself the devil. So it went.

She was at the spearhead of group B with Hye, Nari, Iseul, Yeong-Suk, Yu-Ri, Jason, and Dae-Jung on her tail.

Her second in command, Taeyoon, lead group A, alongside Areum, Sung-Ho, Gyeong, Bora, Han-Bin, and Duri.

Ye-Jun lead the strike team with Sang, Nam-Sun, Deok-Su, and Il-Seong accompanying him.

Her teammates, all nineteen of them, were looking at her, waiting for her, waiting for the signal. She nodded confidently at each of them and waved her hand, giving the go. Immediately, the myriad of MEKAs split into three clusters of assorted colors and began to rocket towards the legs of the giant.

"Group A," she said over the comm, swerving to avoid the first crash of a nearby mortar as the Omnic began to open fire. It's many ruby eyes trained in on her position, and she swallowed hard, her flight suit tightening around her neck. "Circle around back to divert its attention, and spread out its focus. Fire if and only if you have a clear shot—focus on maneuverability. Your targets are the feet and legs."

She activated her defense matrix to shield herself from a burst of fiery bullets. "Group B, we make our stand here. We're going to try climbing this thing, see if we can't take out one or two of its cannons. Let's nerf this son of a bitch into the fourth dimension."

Cheering in agreement, her teammates quickly adjusted to her plan, with group A swerving and weaving around below and group B rocketing up one of its flanks, dealing damage where they could, whilst also avoiding the heavy rain of mortars and incendiaries.

It was going well. Her team had managed to make it to the Omnic's hip, wrecking havoc on its lower cannons.

"Group C," she barked over a sharp grin. "Make your way towards first strike position and wait for my signal. We've got it cornered."

"Understood, D.Va, but we're having a bit of a delay," Ye-Jun replied, sounding strained. There was the faint sound of gunfire in the background. "The Omnic has taken notice of us and is laying out moderate fire. We're not going anywhere."

She took this information, processed it, and dished out a solution in a heartbeat.

"Hye, Yu-Ri, swing around and provide cover for them. We'll watch your backs."

Two of the mechs stationed on the Omnic's hip, one blue and one white, peeled away and jetted off into the snowstorm. She lost sight of them quickly. The blizzard was thickening.

She glanced at her scanner, checking to make sure all nineteen of her teammates are safe. She knew they would be. They were skilled.

Except... there were only eighteen tags. Her heart skipped a beat, and she bit her tongue. Names raced through her head.

Which one? Which had she failed this time?

Ye-Jun crackled back onto the comm. "Shit— we lost Il-Seong. Incendiary burst. He... he's gone. Fuck, man. I kinda liked the guy."

The dog tags around her neck, beneath her suit, felt like a noose. Il-Seong, who thought he looked so cool with his bleached blond hair, who smelled familiar and warm and strongly of tobacco. Il-Seong, who was somehow always able to sneak multiple boxes of cigarettes into his flight suit. Il-Seong and his pearly white smile that the world would never again be graced with. He was gone. Dead. She wondered what she would have to say at his funeral. Certainly nothing of the tobacco. He had made her promise to keep that between them.

She swallowed hard. She needed to focus.

"Understood, Ye-Jun. Keep pressing towards the strike position. Hye, Yu-Ri, where are you?"

"On our way, D.Va," Hye replied, and it was obvious his teeth were clenched. "Our boosters can only go so fast. Fuck, I can't see jack shit in this damn snowstorm."

She didn't get the chance to respond as a heavy blast cracked down on her shields, racking through her mech. 63% efficiency. She bit out a curse. It was a new paint job, too.

"What was that?" Taeyoon asked immediately, ever the worried teammate. He wouldn't live long with such a bleeding heart.

"I got hit," she responded quickly, "but I'm fine. Ye-Jun, I could really use a strike right about now."

Static. Her brows furrowed.

"Ye-Jun, come in."

There was nothing. She whipped her gaze to her scanners. His tag was still there, which meant his mech hadn't been destroyed. So why couldn't she contact him?

She switched tactics, and comms.

"Deok-Su, come in." Nothing but fizz.

Her scanner pinged. Deok-Su's tag had just disappeared. Her heart sank. Soon after, Nam-Sun's followed, flickering out like a broken Christmas light.

Her heart was pounding. "Hye, do you have visuals on group C?"

"Negative, D.Va. We're still trying to get over there. The winds are stronger on this side. We can't move too fast or we'll be wiped out."

She cursed again and continued her climb up the Omnic's side, her team hot on her heels.

Her comm crackled.

"H...hello? Can anybody hear me?" She jumped. It was Sang, one of their youngest and brightest pilots, alongside her and Areum at only eighteen. His voice was shaking.

"I hear you, Sang. What happened? What's your status?"

"...I've been compromised. I took a heavy hit to my windshield, and now there's a big hole in my midsection." Sang sounded breathless, shaken. "Deok-Su and Nam-Sun's mech's were destroyed. O-One minute they were there and the next they were—" the young pilot choked on his words. "They didn't make it. I-I, fuck—I could hear them burning, but I couldn't do anything... and Ye-Jun..."

Her stomach dropped.

"Ye-Jun's mech has a shard of metal through its windshield. There's— t-there's a lot of blood."

She was almost positive that the pilot was crying. "I'm gonna die, D.Va. I know I am. P-please, don't waste time trying to get me out. Just take down that damn Omnic. I-I'm dead anyways."

He began to cough, and the sound scraped at her ears. Wet and haggard. Yeah, he wouldn't live long like that.

"P-please, don't come back for me."

She turned off comms with him briefly, hands shaking, and opened up her connection with Hye and Yu-Ri.

She hated this part—and how many times she'd had to do it.

"Hye, Yu-Ri, pull back."

"D.Va—"

"Group C is lost," she snapped. "Pull back."

"But... understood."

Her mech rattled. A scrape to the left flank. 57% efficiency. She turned her comm back to Sang.

"You were awesome, Sang," she said. "But I've gotta go now. I'll take down that Omnic, no problem. Don't worry."

Static. Her eyes burned, but she took a deep breath and focused on the task at hand. She would mourn later. Sang, and Il-Seong, and Ye-Jun, and another part of her soul along with them.

It was then that she noticed that the gunfire had abruptly stopped. The Omnic rumbled, and then it began to move, faster than she'd seen it move before.

Her heart jumped into her throat, and a panicked voice crackled over the comm. It was Areum, their youngest pilot at seventeen and a half.

"It's moving, and heavy fire has been focused on our position! We're not gonna last long!"

There was a loud, shuddering boom, and her scanners lost another tag. Taeyoon. She could envision it, her second in command whose brightness almost matched her own, now reduced to nothing but a ball of metal and flame. A shame. She liked the man. He had always been so patient with her, even when she was volatile and bitter in the aftermath of another death. Another failure. Not anymore, it seemed. She'd let him down, now, too.

"All groups, retreat," she said, wincing. "We won't win this one."

Areum yelled. "We can't, D.Va. We're pinned. We can't— oh, fu—" the younger pilot screamed, and then the comm cut off.

"Areum!" she yelled, before a new voice came on. One of the older pilots in her group— Iseul.

"Watch out!"

Her mech rumbled— she heard the exact moment when her defense matrix broke, and her team was yelling at her through the comm but her ears were ringing; she couldn't hear anything.

Her mech slipped, losing its footing on the icy metal, and then she was falling. A scream tore its way up her throat. Down, down, down. Her comm cut off as her teammates called her codename, knowing nothing else to yell. The wind was loud and howling, swirling all around her and rocking her mech. Her visuals flickered, flickered, and then died. Maybe she was still screaming, maybe it was the wind. The world was a white and gray blur. A downward spiral, metal peeling away from her mech against the ferocious wind.

Her mech crashed through the ice with a deafening crack. Water gushed into the open cockpit, the cold liquid washing around her and she gasped. Suddenly, it was everywhere, black and swirling and foaming and pouring into her mouth and her eyes and her lungs—

Hana woke with a start. Her heart was pounding, blood boiling. As she had expected they would be when she woke. The remnants of a scream were still sour on her lips. Sweat rolled down her neck and beaded at the base of her spine. She couldn't breathe. She was underwater and she couldn't breathe because everything was cold and black and fuck, the water—

She choked, coughing and spluttering and gasping desperately, her lung burning with pain. I'm here, she thought with a retch. I'm grounded. I'm here. This isn't the ocean. I'm not there anymore.

The room was too hot. She threw off the covers, inhaling deeply and closing her eyes.

It had been *that* dream again, one she hadn't had in a long time, but the one that haunted her more than the others. She had woken herself up midway through it, it seemed, because the dream itself was still fresh on her mind and she could pinpoint exactly when she had decided she needed to wake up before it got to *that* part.

The part when Jason heaved her out of the freezing water and she coughed and she coughed but her lungs never seemed to empty. The part when Areum got stuck beneath one of the Omnic's feet, and with a sickening crunch the youngest pilot's spine broke, and the color of the blood between the gears that was such a stark contrast to the white of the ice and the screams and prying her out of there and knowing immediately that the younger girl would never live alone—

Hana shook her head. She didn't want to think about it.

The lights were off in the room. Someone must have come in and turned them off, as she had no recollection of doing so before falling asleep.

"Athena, what time is it?" she called out to the omnipresent AI. Her voice was hoarse, but she didn't care. Nobody was around to hear her, and she was too tired to give much of a damn, anyways.

"The time is 17:23."

There was time before dinner. Plenty of time.

Hana sat up with a wince. Nanotechnology was amazing, but she figured it couldn't fix everything. Her arm was still in a sling, anyhow. She couldn't feel it yet— Angela had told her that her arm had been hanging on by only a few threads, so it would be a while before she could feel it in full. Her eyes were healed but everything was blurry anyways, and then there was her lung, which would probably bother her somewhat for the rest of her life, and had yet to completely knit itself together.

Hana swung her feet off of the bed, and the polished floor was cold against her bare skin.

"Athena, where's Angela?" she croaked, reaching for the metal chair and pulling herself to her feet. Her right knee still hurt, but the nanotech had done it well, and she could walk only if it was for brief periods of time and as long as she kept the pressure off of it.

"Dr. Ziegler is in the common room getting coffee. Shall I fetch her for you?"

Hana stumbled into a shelf of medical supplies with a string of curses.

"N-Nope! Nope! *Fuck*, don't do that!" Something fell to the floor with a metallic clang. She winced. "And, uh, where's everyone else?"

"Many of the other members are also in the common room. However, Genji and Zenyatta are on the roof, Winston and Dr. Zhou are in Laboratory C, Agent Pharah is in her room, and Commander Morrison— er, Soldier: 76, is in the archives. Mr. Lindholm, Bastion, Mr. Shimada, and Ms. Zaryanova left on a mission to Ilios three hours ago."

She needed to get out of the room. She needed to walk. She needed to do something before her thoughts consumed her.

"Thanks," she said, and opened the door with the press of a button. The hallway was much warmer than the medical bay— it was the first time she'd been out of the clandestine room in days,

and the sudden shift in temperature jarred her a little. Nonetheless, she began to walk, sticking close to the wall and keeping the pressure off of her right leg in an awkward hobble.

The hallways were darkened, and that darkness crept on on the edges of her vision unnaturally. The walls moved, twisting like a snake. She felt dizzy. It was probably the meds. Though, she remembered, she had forgotten to take them this morning, so that was out of the question. And her meds didn't make her hallucinate, anyhow.

Was she still dreaming? All of a sudden, everything felt heavy. Perhaps everything had already been heavy and she was just noticing the feeling now.

Either way. The world was tilting. It felt like she was going to fall. She was seeing double, vision blurring. Memories were breaking through her defenses, the past intermingling with the present and she *knew* it was, but it still felt so real.

She kept walking, even as the scenery faded from Watchpoint: Gibraltar to the South Korean coast once more. Dark hallways faded to stark white, thick heat morphing into biting cold.

Hana opened her eyes. It was pitch black. Her mech was beeping at her angrily, her visuals flickering, static in her ears, and there were all sorts of warnings across her displays but she waved them away subconsciously. It was cold, where she was. Her visuals flickered again. She glanced at them with burning eyes.

16% efficiency. Shit.

Everything had fallen into chaos in her ears, muffled, like she was hearing it through several blankets and a radio tuned into no channel, relaying only white noise that rattled in her brain. Iseul was yelling, barking out unheard orders, trying to fill the gap that Taeyoon left. Areum was screaming, voice distorted over the comm, strangled by sobs. Pain. The younger pilot was in so much pain. Hye and Yu-Ri were murmuring to each other. Reassurances, she supposed. They thought they were going to die.

Duri's tag was gone. So was Duri. In all her green-haired, sharp-toothed glory. And she could see it in her mind's eye— a camouflage green mech crumpled like a crushed can. Duri hadn't gotten her boosters activated in time, and was killed by the fall. Much like Hana, herself, save the fact that Hana had broken through the ice, rather than smashed into solid rock.

Hana's ears were ringing. Ringing, ringing, ringing. The pressure was biting into her head as she sunk. Down, down, deeper she sank, peering upwards at the white ice that had failed to stop her fall. Right, she needed to get back up there, didn't she?

She tested her boosters with numb fingers. Her mech glided upwards towards the surface, and she pressed on. The blaster of a red mech jammed through the reconstructing ice, and she soared upwards, out, out of the damned ocean.

Her MEKA crumpled on the surface and she choked, icy water bubbling out of her, an endless stream and she couldn't breathe in, not yet, because the water poured from her lungs. Humans weren't supposed to breathe underwater. What was she thinking?

Her lungs weren't empty, but it was good enough. She stood.

Iseul was looking at her, they were all looking at her. Lost dogs. They needed directions, and she was the alpha. Alpha wolf.

Two options: fight and die, or flee and live. Flee. She needed to get everyone else out alive. She said something. People began to move. So did she. Up went the controls, up went the mech. She was so, so cold. She couldn't feel her body, and the breeze was cold and biting. Her mech's heating system was in overdrive to keep her alive, but it wasn't perfect, it wasn't enough. Her teeth chattered, her hands shook violently, the ice on her skin frosting over, every movement cracking and sluggish.

Ring. Her ears were bleeding. The pressure had popped her eardrums. Her nose stung. Perhaps it was bleeding, too. Her lungs weren't empty. It hit her again. She coughed, and coughed, until the water was tainted red, too. Not enough. The water burned within her. Salt.

She was directing her mech towards another tattered shape. A mech, painted red. Areum. There was fire, and blood, and she ripped off the hood of the mech to reveal the pinned pilot beneath the MEKA's hide.

Areum's body was twisted, mangled, but her chest rose and fell frantically, so that meant she was still alive.

Hana didn't hesitate, and pulled the younger girl from her metal cage. Bones popped and cracked. She didn't stop. Areum needed to get out.

Ring. Areum was speaking, and then she was speaking, voices both equally panicked. She held the younger pilot close to her until Iseul took Areum away.

Ring.

Areum was broken, so broken. If she lived, if she actually made it through this, she would not be living alone ever again. Someone would always have to help her, mechanical limbs or not.

The ring was higher in pitch. It sounded like a siren. The cold plains twisted into a hospital room.

A doctor was telling her something. She caught a name— 'Song.' Hypothermia. Pneumonia. Yes, that would explain the shivers. She was sick. She had almost drowned. The cold was deep, like teeth, sinking into the marrow of her bones, freezing her from the inside out.

The ring was loud. Deafening. She couldn't feel her lips.

Suddenly, everything was painfully bright. The Kashgar mission. Intense heat. Fire raining from the sky. Her ears still bled. Ring, ring, ring. Twin helicopters, a cliffside, empty fields of snow.

Symmetra was broken. She looked like Areum. Areum was laying there in the burnt rocks, body twisted and mangled. The world was on fire. Stomping feet, bullets pounding into sandstone.

Ring.

Ring.

"Hana?"

A door had opened next to her as she stumbled by. She paid it no notice, too entranced by her memories.

Her leg was killing her. Still, she walked.

Voices pressed into her ears, old and almost forgotten until now.

"How do you feel about the death of the giant Omnic?" the newsman asked, at a press conference after the sixteenth and final strike at the Omnic. Cameras were everywhere, and the stand was just too big for her. Five microphones and a room full of people awaited her response eagerly.

Empty, empty words. Ringing. Pounding in her ears from her untamed heart. She was so tired. So, so tired and cold. She'd only been back for a day. She hadn't slept in three. Before the conference, she hadn't even bothered to put on makeup. She was sick. A haunted expression had overtaken her gaunt features, and when she caught her reflection on the glass podium she realized just how sallow her cheeks were, how red her eyes were, how pale her face was. The hypothermia had almost taken her, all those months ago. She still had not yet recovered. Nor had she from the deaths the final strike had burdened her with. So many funerals. So little time.

"I feel like a winner. It was a long battle—a battle hard won, but we did it. We won," she responded hollowly. The people wanted to see her grin, wanted to see her stand strong in the fatal end, needed to see her unwavering in the face of adversity, but she was tired. Oh, how she wanted to fall apart, and she was a hairsbreadth away from doing so, but she was an idol and a symbol and she couldn't break before the people. Feeling nothing was better than feeling anything harmful, she supposed.

"And what of the pilots that died in the fight? As their leader, what do you have to say to their families?" someone else called out.

Ring.

"I'm sorry. It should have been me," she whispered, wavering where she stood. Those were the words that had gone unspoken that day, no matter how much she had wished to speak them.

Instead, in that instant, she had let D.Va take control, because Hana was a coward.

"Their deaths were not in vain. Because of them, we were able to win. If not for their sacrifices, that Omnic would still be tromping around," she said, grim. Practiced lines, written by someone she didn't know. On the inside, she gagged. The words were disgusting, and she hated saying them. She was horrified with herself. Because she did not miss her teammates. Damn herself for being so heartless, damn herself for not doing more to save them. She could have. Damn it, she could have.

She was a horrible person. It would take many miracles to convince her otherwise.

Words in her mouth, put there by the government. She spat them out quickly, before their vile taste could overwhelm her.

"They were awesome. Each and every one of them. Do well to remember them, remember their names. They were the true heroes of South Korea."

"What will you do now?" another reporter rushed, and another mic was shoved into her face.

Too many.

She blanched.

Strain. She was panicking. Her ears were ringing, ringing, ringing. Failure. Guilt. Resentment. Fear. An ominous unknown.

"I play to win," she quipped, but it was entirely lacking of her usual luster. "Nothing can stop me. I saved South Korea, and now I'm gonna go save the world. I've been commissioned to fight with the new Overwatch—I'm gonna show them what MEKA is made of."

Condemnation. Justice. Punishment. MEKA was made of liars and toy soldiers.

She left, then, unable to stand the smell of metal and blaring lights any longer, and retreated to the bathroom to empty the contents of her stomach.

Fake. It felt so fake, so disgusting lying to them so openly. Her ears rang. Her heart was loud—th-thump, th-thump—beating a hard and fearful pace.

Heat. Vertigo.

"Oi, can you even hear me—?"

Sweat rolled down her neck, down her cheeks. Her stomach roiled, and she retched dryly, choking as the vertigo threatened to steal the ground from beneath her feet.

"It's all your fault!" Areum screamed, strapped to a black wheelchair, dressed in a bloody hospital gown. Both of the younger pilot's legs were missing, as were her right arm and right eye. The rest of her was scarred terribly. She couldn't feel the lower half of her body anymore.

"You fucking—you let them die! You left them to die!"

Hana took what she got, kept herself stony in visage. She deserved it.

"Do you not feel remorse?! You're inhuman, D.Va! It should have been you! You should have died instead of Ye-Jun and the others!"

She knew. She knew that. She heard it all the time, but she never learned. She never changed, did she?

A gentle, warm hand landed on her shoulder.

"Hana, please, you need to stop."

The hand felt sickeningly familiar. She jerked away from it, stomach twisting further into a knot.

More memories flooded the hallway, morphing the scenery around her into that of a dark alley.

"What do we have here?"

The man was huge, and stunk of alcohol and gasoline. His hands were large and rough and greasy.

She threw him off with ease, and took several steps back to create some space.

His bristly face faded out of focus, replaced with a brief visage of amber eyes and faded freckles and large, circular glasses on a button nose.

"Hana, I'm just trying to help—"

Run. She needed to run. Her body twitched, and then she was sprinting. Sprinting away. Her leg hurt, her leg hurt so much, and so did her lung. She couldn't run in a straight line, and she was barely upright.

Loud breathing in her ear, like the panting of a dog. Was that her? Or was that the man hot on her heels?

Dread filled her.

The memory continued, warped as it was.

The man took a step forward. He wanted her body, she knew. She wouldn't let him have it. He was like the rest. He would go down.

He reached out a meaty hand. It brushed against her arm. It was much gentler, much warmer than she remembered it being.

That didn't matter. He was touching her, and that was unacceptable. She dodged, but rather than stay and fight like the memory usually went, she instead turned and ran.

Why was she running? Why did her body hurt to such great extent? She was slow. Too slow. He would catch her at this rate.

Faster. She pushed her body faster, pain jolting up her leg at every step. She couldn't breathe. The alleyways were fading into hallways. Stone brick turned to metal and then back again.

"Hana— bloody hell, wait!"

She couldn't breathe. Her legs felt weak and sluggish, but she needed to run. Her toe caught on something, and she stumbled, her numb arm slamming into the wall. The impact sent an uncomfortable tingling sensation jolting to her fingertips.

His arms wrapped around her waist from behind. The grip was loose, but firm. She cried out as pain lanced through her lungs.

He had her. He was going to touch her. She couldn't let that happen.

Weakly, she fought, scrabbling against his hairy arms. Why was she so weak? She needed to

escape. He couldn't touch her.

She kicked out, and her feet must have found purchase in something, because there was a yelp and his hold on her loosened.

She ran. Her heart was pounding like a jackhammer. Her ears rung. Ringing, ringing, ringing.

Pain. Fear. Disgust. Escape. Escape.

Hands were everywhere. Too many faces, all blurred. She needed to get out. She thrashed, but her arms were held back. The alleyway flared briefly into a room full of people. Bright lights. She said something, or screamed something. She was dizzy. And tired. Her eyes and throat were hot.

Suddenly, she was back in the hospital room, peering down at Areum's broken, broken body.

Disgust. Fear.

A scream tore its way from her dry lips. Ringing. Pounding. Heat.

Areum. Satya. Alleyways. Gravestones.

"You failed," her mother sneered. "As if you'll ever make us proud. Trying to go make friends?"

"They'll be the death of you," her father warned. "If you turn to them, you'll get hurt. You're naive. You will always be a child to them, and they'll never be proud of you."

Guilt. Anger. Disgust. Fear. Sorry.

"I know!" she screamed, voice broken. "I already know that!" The sobs were tearing her apart, little by little.

"Then give up."

"I can't."

"You're a fool. You can do better. You can do better than this."

"I know."

Her mother sneered. "Of all the children I could have birthed, I had to give birth to you. Do better, or it'll never be enough. Strength is to rise alone. You rely on them too much. You're a disappointment in every shape and form, Hana. Or should I call you D.Va? Who are you anymore?"

The anger boiled in her, surged through her like lava in her veins. She opened her mouth and out came a tempestuous roar.

"I already know that!"

And just as quickly, the rage was gone. She just felt sick and lonely and like she was a little bit broken into a thousand pieces. Her voice choked, tears dripping from her nose.

"But I wanted it to be enough. All I wanted to do was live. All I wanted was to make you proud.

All I wanted—" she inhaled sharply, "—was to have a family."

"Hana, you've done enough."

Lena.

The world spun into focus. Her good arm was being held behind her back gently, and she was pinned against a warm chest by a steady arm around her shoulders. The smell of tea and cinnamon hit her nose. No more alcohol, no more metal, no more blood and no more gasoline. Just tea and cinnamon.

Lena.

"You're good. You're all right. Breathe with me, luv. It's not real. What you're seeing happened a long time ago. You're in Watchpoint: Gibraltar."

Hana breathed. In, and out. In, and out. A strong heartbeat thudded against her ear. It was comforting. It was real, not like the nightmarish mesh of memory and feverish imagination that she was trapped in. Fingers ran through her hair hesitantly, if not a little awkwardly. She closed her eyes, focusing on her breathing. In, and out. In, and out, matching the tempo of Lena's lungs.

The Brit spoke again, barely above a whisper.

"S'all right, Hana. Just breathe. You've got nothing to be sorry for."

That was right. She had already apologized. She was fine. Nothing to be sorry for. Suddenly, she was glad that it was just her and Lena in the hallway. The only thing illuminating the darkness was the pale blue light of Lena's chronal accelerator.

"How do you know my name," she croaked, almost incomprehensible.

"Angie told me," Lena said softly. "She told me to keep an eye on you, just in case you had a relapse. I don't know everything, but I think I know enough now."

The Brit sighed and held her a little tighter.

"For what it's worth, I'm proud of you," she murmured, hugging the younger woman close. "I'm proud."

Hana let out a strangled sob, because she had waited her whole life to hear those words. They were all she had ever wanted to hear. All she had ever wanted to know was that someone *cared*, someone appreciated her tearing herself apart. Someone was *proud* of her.

"You're safe now. You have a family— Overwatch is your family now. Shhh. That's it, get it all out."

Hana leaned into the warm touch. There was no strength left in her. Lena was the only thing

keeping her upright.

"But we need to go back to the medical bay. You're hurt, and your wounds are strained again."

"Okay," she mumbled. She was shaking. Not crying, but her shoulders trembled and they would not stop. "Sorry."

"You're fine, luv!" Lena chirped, slinging her good arm around her shoulders carefully, but with ease. "Things like this happen. They've happened to all of us. It's the memories, right? You're fine."

"Okay."

The two began an awkward shuffle down the hallway. It was quiet; she was exhausted. Restless, but absolutely drained.

"Do you want to talk about it?" the Brit asked, voice lilting pleasantly, but no amount of pleasantness could have sugarcoated the brutality of the question itself.

Hana's mouth twisted. "No."

"Do you need to?"

"...Maybe."

Lena nodded contemplatively. "How about after the call?"

"I—" her breath hitched. "—yeah. I'll tell you after the call. A-and Satya. I'll tell Satya, too."

Lena smiled sagely, and Hana didn't know what to do with herself so she hastily tried to take it back in an incoherent string of words.

"On second thought—"

Lena laughed good-naturedly and patted her back. Hana heard a door open, but her face was directed towards the floor, so she could only assume that it was the door to the medical bay.

Quick footsteps made their way towards the two. Hana winced, clinging a little tighter to Lena's arm.

Angela sighed in exasperation, taking her from the Brit's arms and turning to set her down on the abandoned bed.

"I don't know what possessed you to leave your bed, or the medical bay at all, especially after I *specifically* told you not to, but I won't ask." It was clear that the Swiss woman wanted to, but she kept her word and held the questions down. Rather, the doctor busied herself with a medical scanner, running it up and down the young pilot's body.

Hana shared a look with Lena, who nodded with a small smile and turned to leave.

"Till tonight, then, yeah?" the older woman said, winking, before blinking out of the room.

Angela quirked a brow. "Tonight?"

Hana fiddled with her hands. "After the call," she said, her mouth feeling very dry all of a sudden. "I'm telling her."

The blonde's gaze softened at that, and she loosened the sling from around Hana's neck without a comment.

Hana made a confused sound, tugging her numb arm close to her chest.

"We need to clean you up," the older woman said, setting the scanner down on a nearby tray. "You do not want to lie here for a few more days without showering— it has already been over a week. Also, I need to clean your wounds. You strained them, but they thankfully weren't reopened, and I was looking for an opportunity to clean them, anyways."

Angela paused, and then smiled, and Hana's eyes traced over the aged lines of her weary face in stunned wonder.

"And if you're feeling alright after this, then you can join us in the mess hall for dinner."

Hana's heart skipped a beat or two at the doctor's finishing words. Eating with everyone, in a warm atmosphere, with boisterous voices and laughter and stories. The warmth that her life had been absent of until recently.

It was, quite frankly, terrifying.

She thought of Areum, Il-Seong, Duri, Deok-Su, Sang and Ye-Jun; her parents, and the man in the alleyway. Kim.

"Okay," she said, hesitant, a wan smile tugging her lips. It would be terrifying, and likely overwhelming, but she wanted to try.

D.Va shook her head disapprovingly. "You're an idiot, Hana," she said, "and you're blind. Still."

"I'm getting better," Hana replied, indignant.

D.Va just shook her head in disappointment, turning away and leaving her alone on the white plain.

"I'm getting better, right?" she repeated.

The snow fell a little harder. It wasn't much of an answer.

Chapter End Notes

Have I mentioned how much I love Lena??? No??? Because she is the light of my life and she needs more *appreciation*.

Lena is such a good older sister. uwu

See y'all tomorrow.

- Ace.

slipknot

Chapter Notes

TW: excessive swearing, inferred panic attack

This chapter's short and unedited but at least it's on time.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The shower room was empty. Vaguely, Hana thought, it was reminiscent of the one in the Iceland watchpoint, only much bigger, with less memories. Regardless, entering the room gave her chills.

"I'll help you get undressed," Angela said, closing the door behind her as she entered and locking it.

"I can do it myself," Hana grunted, already struggling to take off her loose shirt. It was, as expected, difficult, considering the fact that she could only move one arm, and that one arm could not move above her shoulder lest she tear open her lung again.

Angela grabbed her hands firmly, carefully pried them away from the hem of her shirt.

"I wasn't asking," the doctor stated, and Hana smartly chose not to reply and simply accept the fact that yes, she was injured, and yes, she was also incapacitated, and yes, she *did* need help.

It took some finagling too get the shirt off without raising Hana's good arm too much, but it became apparent that the doctor had undressed people in such manner before (Hana didn't want to know whom) because it went off without a hitch.

"Athena," Angela said as she folded Hana's shirt and set it down next to the door. "Start shower. One-hundred and five degrees Fahrenheit. Low pressure."

One of the showerheads hissed on, but its quiet sound quickly faded into the background as Angela approached Hana again.

"Shorts," the doctor said. Hana grumbled, but began shimmying out of her bottoms nonetheless. She had no power here. Even D.Va was aware of that.

When her shorts skimmed past her injured knee, she winced, and spared a glance down at the strained wound. It was tinting, bruising red and purple. It looked swollen.

Angela followed her gaze, and sighed. "Internal bleeding," the older woman explained, reaching down to grab the shorts and fold them, too. Angela opened her mouth to say more, but seemed to reconsider, and closed her mouth once more. Hana noted how tightly the blonde's jaw was clenched.

"Gauze?" she questioned, gesturing vaguely to the bandaged wrapped tightly around her torso.

Angela hummed— a rather unhelpful answer— and reached forward to undo the bindings. Hana held perfectly still, figuring that she had already made enough trouble for the doctor already, and D.Va rolled her eyes at the gesture but Hana was quick to put the facade underfoot.

Once the gauze had been unwrapped and carefully rolled up, Hana slipped out of her underwear. It occurred to her vaguely that she should be more self-conscious, considering that she was nude before another person, a situation she had never imagined she would find herself in, but the notion that it was Angela who was witnessing her exposure was somewhat comforting. Angela was a professional, Angela was a protector, and Angela was something of a parent to her. (It took strength to admit the last thought, but when she did, she realized that it didn't sound wrong, nor discomfoting to say.)

"What now?" she asked, eyeing the grooves of the floor as to avoid the doctor's gaze.

"I'll let you wash yourself," Angela said. "There's a bench in there if you need to sit down. When you come out, I'll check on your injuries. I figured you'd want to clean yourself. However, when you need to wash your hair, I'll be the one to do it."

Hana pondered this, furrowed her brows, and then nodded in understanding. It made sense that Angela would wash her hair for her, since Hana wasn't allowed to lift her arm above her shoulder. But she didn't know how she would wash herself effectively with one arm.

Of course, almost as if she had read her mind, Angela had an answer.

"But if you need help washing off, call for me."

"Understood," Hana replied, surprising herself with her own tonelessness, and then hobbled off towards the source of the steam that had begun to fill the large, metal-tiled room.

She slipped into the shower, slid the curtain shut, and then collapsed on the small bench that sat directly beneath the showerhead's hot stream. She sat there for a few moments, staring blankly at the navy blue fabric of the curtain and letting the hot water run over her bare shoulders and the tips of her hair. The methodical thundering of water against her skin became a faraway sensation, and her mind drifted. She couldn't think, but she also couldn't focus, and the feeling became somewhat confounding.

And then she felt it. That familiar burn in her throat and behind her eyes. She didn't fight it this time, letting the grief wash over her in gentle, caressing waves. She sobbed openly, without restraint. For what reason she cried, she didn't know, but it didn't matter to her. She needed this. She needed to let it all go, let it run down the drain beneath her bare feet, tears lost amongst the water from the showerhead.

She only cried for a few minutes at most, but it felt like years. (Years of tears dammed up behind glass eyes, spilling out at once, and it was another burden relieved from her taut shoulders. All the tears she would ever need to cry.)

Hana eventually managed to pull herself together, inhaling and exhaling deeply several times before reaching for the bar of soap resting vigilant at her side. Cleaning herself was a long-practiced system, ruffled only by the fact that one of her arms was cold and unfeeling.

She cleaned her legs, first, skimming lightly over the worsening bruise on her knee and the other small, scabbing cuts that were too deep for the nanotechnology to heal on the first go around. She cleaned her numb arm, and it was still unsettling to watch her own fingers run over the sickly pale, slightly bruised skin, and not be able to feel it. (And she tried the best she could to clean her good arm, but she gave up after the soap slipped out of her hand and she realized just how awkward bending down was without aggravating her numerous abrasions.

And then she got to her torso. She hadn't really looked at the wound that had caused her so much pain since she'd watched the metal pierce through her chest, but now, there was little else to look

at.

The best word she could think to describe it as was 'angry.' And, indeed, it was an angry, reddened wound. Long and jagged, cutting from the center of her torso diagonally upwards to just below the curve of her left breast. The skin around it was blackened and raw— inky veins branching out from the scarlet incision. It looked as if it would burst open and bleed at any given moment.

Hana cleaned around it carefully, wincing every time her soapy fingers brushed against the singed, torn skin, and praying that it would not reopen as she had so vividly envisioned.

"Athena," she called, "turn off the showers." The water turned off immediately. The loss of pressure against her skin was jarring, and she pulled back the curtain, wet bangs dripping into her eyes. Angela was waiting on the other side with a white towel. The doctor stepped forward and draped it around her shoulders, but left it somewhat open. Hana was about to question why, but quickly realized that the doctor was examining the injury over her lung, and bit her tongue.

Eventually, Angela sighed and closed the towel.

"Thank you, *Schatz*."

Hana's eyes widened, aghast.

"For what?"

Angela smiled, the corners of her eyes crinkling, guiding her over towards a stool and several bottles of shampoo.

"You saved Satya, Jesse, and Genji when you dove off that ledge. So, thank you."

D.Va's words echoed in her head, mocking.

"You can't possibly atone for what you've done. Not by throwing your own life away and hoping it'll make up for the hundreds you've murdered."

Hana bit her lip, tugged her towel close. "I didn't do it for them," she admitted, tired and sheepish. "I'm no hero. Don't thank me."

Angela opened her mouth, but Hana held up her good hand to stop her.

"*Please*," she begged, voice weak. She didn't want to fight this battle. It wasn't worth it, not over something so simple, so needless. "Please, Angela."

The doctor searched her gaze, piercing blue boring into dark, null brown.

Hana sucked in a breath, left lung aching. Those blue eyes were intense; fiery, now. Blazing with righteous fury.

"Whoever convinced you this," the doctor seethed, gripping tightly onto Hana's shoulders. "Whoever said you weren't a hero, they're a fool."

Hana was pulled into a tight, protective hug.

"Hana Song," Angela said firmly, "you are *the bravest* person I have *ever* met. You've gone through so much, and yet you still manage to go out and fight for the world every single day, while still suffering so much. You're so, so strong, Hana. The world is throwing stones at you, and

yet, here you are. You had a slab of carbon fiber shoved through muscle and bone, you lost 42% of your body's blood, and you *lived*."

The doctor's voice quieted considerably. "If *anyone* on earth is to be called a hero, then it's you."

Hana, to her credit, did not cry. What she *did* do was bury her face in Angela's shoulder, and she shook. Her body trembled, not violently, but just enough to make her voice waver when she spoke.

"Mom," she whispered, eyes wide, mind lost in a memory once more. "Dad, do you hear that?"

"D.Va?" she called, the snow swirling around her in a thick cyclone. "D.Va, did you hear?" She laughed, genuine, for the first time in twelve years. "I'm a hero."

For the second time in her life, she was greeted with nothing but silence as a response.

In the end, Hana decided against eating with everyone. Angela had tried to wash her hair in the shower room, but the touch of hot water and shampoo had miraculously caused her previously injured and supposedly healed eye to start bleeding, and nobody in the hallways even bothered to question why Angela was carrying Hana under her arm— Hana, who was bleeding from the eye and holding her good hand against her face— and sprinting towards the medical bay.

Fareeha brought Hana's dinner to the medical bay upon hearing of this misadventure, and happened to enter right when Angela was finishing applying nanotechnology to Hana's eyelid. Angela did not greet her, too focused on her work. Hana (D.Va) would have, and opened her mouth to say hello, but the application of the cold fluid made her wince, and all that left her mouth was a pained wheeze.

Fareeha took note of the tense silence and merely waved. The Egyptian took the metal seat beside Hana's bedside and handed her a tray. Hana quirked a brow, cringing again as another nanotechnology-coated cotton swab passed over her eye.

"*Koshary*," Fareeha said, smiling. "You will like it."

Hana accepted the food, glad yet again that she was ambidextrous enough to be able to eat efficiently with either hand. Once Angela had finished applying the nanotechnology, Fareeha left, gently coaxing the doctor away to eat dinner, too (with little difficulty), and assuring the blonde that Hana would be fine on her own.

Eating alone was something Hana was used to. It reminded her of home. She ate in silence, thought of nothing and everything all at once, and imagined, for a moment, that she was at a table for ten, with large windows behind her, in a house empty, but never dusty.

Angela returned several minutes later to find Hana staring at her near-untouched *koshary*. The doctor pried the plate from her numb hand, set it down on the metal chair, and held her close.

"The time is now 2055 hours," Athena said pleasantly overhead. "You have a call with the South

Korean government in five minutes."

"Thanks, Athena," Hana grunted, shuffling up the headboard and swinging her legs over the side of the medical bed. Angela was at her side in an instant, intending on helping her to her feet, but Hana shrugged her off.

This call would not be a pleasant one, whatever its true intents and purposes were; she needed to prepare for the worst. Hana began fiddling with the clasp of her sling, standing slowly and sliding her unfeeling arm out of the sleeve.

"I need to look as uninjured as possible," she said when Angela moved to stop her. "If they know I got hurt, they'll put me out of commission— especially if I got *this* hurt." She glared at her numb arm, silently willing it to move. "It'll hurt a bit, but at least I'll still be able to fight."

Angela bit her lip, but did not argue like Hana had expected, as much as it looked like the doctor wanted to protest.

"Fine."

Hana smirked— it was a D.Va smirk. A smirk that portrayed confidence, when really she was just trying to mask some other emotion. In this case, that emotion was anxiety.

"Thanks."

Angela pursed her lips and hooked Hana's arm around her shoulders. "Let's go."

The door to the common room opened louder than Hana had expected it would, but that was probably because the hallways had been so sparse. The common room was not as crowded as she expected, either, bearing only Reinhardt, Winston, Satya, Lena, McCree, and Fareeha. A large screen took over one side of the room, big and blue, expecting the inevitable, ominous call.

Reinhardt bore a strangely tense expression, large arms crossed over his enormous chest. Winston was fiddling with the screen. Satya and Lena sat on the far side of the room, chatting quietly, but they both waved at her as soon as she entered. McCree and Fareeha were near Reinhardt, bearing near-identical scowls.

Hana peeled away from Angela, hobbling over towards the blue screen. She had changed into something more appropriate for the situation— black leggings, a white tank top and a soft pink hoodie with the sleeves rolled up. Her old dog tags were tucked beneath her shirt. She assumed a militaristic stance, legs spread apart evenly, hands folded behind her back neatly (her right hand held onto her left, to make it look like both arms were functioning properly). Her expression was stoic.

"Start the call," she said, voice clear, the military side of D.Va taking over her. Winston blinked in surprise and gave her a long look, pointedly at her knee which was certainly starting to hurt by now, but pressed a button and lumbered away from the screen.

There was a long, long pause. Time seemed to stop. Hana held her breath.

The screen flickered, and then an old, unfortunately familiar face filled the screen.

"Senator Jin," she greeted, her tongue instinctively speaking in fluent Korean. (The likely subconscious reason, she supposed, was so that none of the others in the room understood what they were talking about.)

"D.Va," the older man replied, folding his hands on the visible desk before him. "Do you know why we're having this conversation?"

She grit her teeth, brows drawing together. "I don't, sir."

He hummed noncommittally. She couldn't read his expression; it was unsettling.

Jin sighed, procuring a handkerchief from the pocket of his suit and dabbing at his brow.

"I'll cut straight to the point," he said, tucking the handkerchief back into his pocket. He met her gaze evenly. "You have not been streaming as much. Why is that? You have never before shown such incompetence."

The snow stopped dead in its tracks. D.Va, from somewhere in the crystalline whiteness, laughed.

"What?" she asked, hands falling to her sides. She took a step back, eyes wide and fearful. This was it—he'd figured her out. "What do you mean? I've been streaming. I've been doing my job." Everything felt like it was falling apart. D.Va wasn't even trying to hold Hana together anymore. "Everything's fine. I've been streaming." Sweat rolled down the side of her face. It was a trap. She knew it was just manipulation. She *knew* that, but her body was reacting of its own volition, panic overtaking logic, adrenaline replacing pain.

Jin's expression turned stony. "Pull yourself together, *child*."

Hana stiffened. That title. That *fucking* title. D.Va snapped to attention. The bitterness and frustration she had almost forgotten surged to her tongue. Her expression went blank— she took a step forward, grabbed her numb hand and tugged it behind her back once more.

"I apologize, sir," she said, voice completely devoid of emotion. She had to stay calm. She was D.Va. D.Va did not panic like an insolent *child*. She bit back her fear with a hard swallow.

Jin hummed again. "Since you obviously cannot be trusted to do your job without proper supervision, you are to come back to South Korea and work directly from your offices here. I have already set up a line of flights for you. You leave from Madrid in three days."

Hana ground her teeth together, but said nothing. Jin continued, as if he had not noticed her silent seething.

"Do you understand?"

Silence.

"Is there a problem, D.Va?"

"No," Hana said, lost in the blizzard, cold and numb. "No problem, sir."

"Yes, there's a *fucking* problem," Hana (D.Va) snarled. "I'm not coming back." Her throat was on fire. She took a step forward. "I'm staying in Overwatch. You sent me here, and now that I'm

finally getting comfortable, finding my place, you intend to rip me from my home and drag me back to the hell I'd barely escaped from?"

Jin gazed at her, sweat beading on his forehead. "You will follow orders, *child*," he sneered.

Hana took a threatening step forward, slamming her hands down on one of Winston's work tables. Her numb arm tingled— she didn't care.

"*Fuck* you," she snarled, the rage steaming within her. "I'm not going back there. I killed that fucking Omnic— I did my job. I'm done. I'll stream whenever I *fucking* feel like it, asshat. I may work for you, but I'm *D.Va*, hero of South Korea, and I'm fucking *done* listening to your patronizing bullshit."

Jin whipped out his handkerchief, wiping at his brow with renewed vigor. "I can put you on suspension," he threatened, voice weak. "I can put you out of commission if you do not comply. Is that what you want?"

Hana barked out a laugh, a sharp one, made to attack the small man on the other side of the screen. "*Senator Jin*," she said, cracking a terse, sharp-toothed grin, "*does it look like*," she leaned forward, gripping the table tightly, "*I fucking care?*"

Jin puffed up his chest. "*Child*, you will listen to me."

Hana swiped everything off of the work table with a quick swipe. Her lung screamed in pain at the abrupt action. Something crashed to the floor. Jin winced. "I will obey orders," she sneered, "when you stop being such a condescending *fuckwad*. And you won't put me out of commission — I know you need me too much. You'll continue to supply me with mechs and you'll support my sponsors and provide me with money because you know that's the only way you'll gain anything."

Her breathing was labored now. She was seeing red. "So kindly *fuck off* and try talking to me again when you realize that I'm not going *anywhere*."

She turned her ragged glare to one of the small cameras on the wall. "Athena," she called, reverting back to English, "end the call."

The last thing she saw was Jin opening his mouth to retort, before the whole screen went black. Her ears were buzzing, she couldn't seem to catch her breath. Her lung was killing her— everything was moving in slow motion. She glanced downwards. The front of her hoodie was turning red. She blinked slowly, wavering where she stood, before her bad knee decided that it'd taken enough abuse for one day, and gave out.

Her eyes rolled into the back of her head as she fell, her consciousness slipping between her numb fingers like sand, and she was kindly greeted with darkness. No *D.Va*, no memories, nothing.

Just silence.

Chapter End Notes

How do you government? How do you health? How do you not type something into Google that you will inevitably regret later?

Writing is hard. ;-;

FYI, I will be going camping all this week and we're heading out tomorrow, so there won't be any updates for a week unless I can find a place with good service. See you then!

- Ace.

to trust

Chapter Notes

Sorry about the late update! The weather killed my neighborhood's power, but we got it back!

Also: going out of town again this weekend, but next chapter will be up by Monday!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

She stood alone on a dead, grassy hill. The sky was filled with smoke, tall and round like an infinite fishbowl. A red scarf was tied around her neck, seemingly the only notable color in the otherwise monochromatic scene.

Her body lingered before a pair of gravestones; flat, gray marble pressed against the earth, untarnished by rain and storm. A cold wind swirled around her, thrashing her hair, cold against her cheeks.

Hana opened her mouth to say something. Her lips were moving, but no sound came out, not that she could hear. The frigid breeze picked up, her hair flying around her in an ebony crown.

"Five weeks," she heard her father whisper, cold and biting like the wind brushing against the back of her neck. "Five weeks."

And she remembered. She remembered like a punch to the gut.

It was that time again of year, it seemed. It snuck up on her this time. Perhaps she'd been trying to forget about it; perhaps she'd merely forgotten.

She had five weeks. Five weeks until then.

"I'll be there," she heard herself reply, and then the world faded and blurred until all she could see was darkness.

It was amazing, all that she could see in the span of a mere few seconds.

"She's wakin' up! See, I told you it wasn't gonna be life-threatening!"

Hana blinked, her eyes feeling goopy and raw. The previous silence around her exploded into hushed din, blurred bodies moving back and forth across her periphery in an assortment of colors.

She moved to sit up, but someone was quick to push her back down. The hand that held her was firm, and large, but also strong in a very quiet manner. No doubt, it was Fareeha's. Hana didn't try to resist further.

"What happened?" she asked instead, licking her dry lips. Her mouth, as a whole, was rather parched, she noted.

"You passed out," said Fareeha as she handed her a cup of water. Hana accepted it gratefully. "It was only for a few seconds, thankfully, but—" the Egyptian chuckled, then, "—obviously, eight seconds is long enough to send everyone into a panic."

Hana hummed and handed Fareeha her now empty cup.

"Well," she said, moving to sit up again. "I did die for eighteen seconds. Maybe that's part of why."

Fareeha's expression sobered quickly, and she put a hand on the small of Hana's back and helped her up the rest of the way.

"Or, perhaps we were just worried."

Hana offered a tight smile. "Or that."

Fareeha let out a yelp as she was suddenly shoved over— or, from Hana's perspective, barreled over— by Lena.

"Hiya!" the Brit chirped upon sitting upright, still somewhat on top of Fareeha. "Glad to see you're finally awake! Gave us all a right heart attack, conkin' out like that."

Hana blinked, still reeling from the entirety of the situation. "Sorry?"

Lena's bright smile dimmed, her grin fading as she swooped Hana into her arms for a brief hug. "Don't apologize, luv. Really. I'm just pokin' a bit of fun, s'all. "

Hana didn't understand the point of making jokes, or poking fun. She only understood the words of text she was fed every day. She only understood how to throw spears and bury swords beneath bone and skin. She didn't understand, but she could certainly pretend to. Yes, that was easy. That was how adults handled things— by lying and pretending. She, of all people, would know.

"You're relapsing," D.Va warned, emerging from the thicket of the snow, boots crunching over each eddy and rise of soft powder.

In response to Lena, she nodded, albeit with difficulty as smushed against the Brit's shoulder as she was, and then shrugged Lena off as she had shrugged Fareeha off, and clambered to her feet.

Her knee ached and burned. Her numb arm was limp, tingling and unmoving. She almost felt sick simply from standing, but she was not weak. She would persist, even if it killed her.

"That's what you said last time, and you died for eighteen seconds," D.Va didn't hesitate to remind her. "You're going back to Hana Song. Whatever happened to getting better? Who do you want to become?"

Oh, she knew it would tear herself apart, relapsing like this. She kind of wanted it, though. Her defenses were lacking and if going back to the way she was before would protect her, then relapse she would, willingly and with whole heart. A clean slate.

Hana shrugged, her lips cold, hands numb. An ocean swirled beneath her feet. "Who cares."

D.Va sneered. "Figure out who you are already. It's been long enough."

Hana blinked, and could not convince herself to feel any shred of remorse.

D.Va paused, pursing her lips, bloodied skin taught across her knuckles as she clenched her fists.

"Answer me this, then," said the facade, stepping back, face becoming blurred and gray. "Did you create me to protect you, or did I create you to hide what was weak?"

"Hana!"

Hana jolted, the snowy expanse dissipating. Fareeha was standing before her, brows furrowed in concern. "You spaced out," said the Egyptian. Hana blinked— that she had. She was having a hard time focusing on any one thing for any length longer than a second.

"I'm fine," she said, wetting her lips and looking down. She wasn't going to beat around the bush, no. She was far too tired at this point. "I just— I need space."

Fareeha nodded. "Do you—?"

D.Va sneered, Hana sighed, and the combined noise sounded something like a scoff. "I can get back to my room on my own," she bit out. "Don't baby me, Fareeha. That wasn't the agreement." Hana glanced down at the bloody patch on her hoodie, already blackened and dry. "Plus, the bleeding's stopped, and Ziegs isn't going batshit crazy," a knife-sharp side glance at the doctor, who had her back turned to them, engrossed in a conversation with Reinhardt, "so I'm obviously going to live."

The Egyptian opened her mouth, closed it, and released Hana's shoulders with much reluctance. Hana hummed a vague sound of thanks, turning on her heel to amble down the hallway, paying no mind to the pain of her ailed leg. Nobody stopped her, nobody tried to speak to her. She doubted anyone was even in the hallways other than herself.

D.Va was laughing. "I still can't believe you actually thought, even for a moment, that you were getting better."

Hana shrugged. "I was, but I can't let the memories go yet. I just need to..." she trailed off, knowing that D.Va knew the rest of the sentence.

The facade paused and scowled. "Hana, no."

Hana smiled, weary. "It's the only thing we haven't tried, other than—"

"Ne, ne, I get it, but why... why that?"

Hana laughed bitterly. "Are you scared? You, the great D.Va, Starcraft II world champion, the hero of South Korea, scared of paying a visit?"

D.Va looked her dead in the eye, face dangerously serious.

"Yes."

"We need to go there, anyways."

"That's right where Jin wants us, Hana."

"We're not going for Jin."

D.Va ran a hand through her hair, mussing the silky brown strands, and did not argue.

Her room was quiet. Compared to the cacophonous babel of the common room, her room was almost ghostly in its utter lack of noise. She shook off the discomfort and switched on her lights. Her door hissed close behind her. There was a heavy sort of tension in the air, a pregnant pause left unresolved. With a sigh, she shuffled herself out of her hoodie, being careful not to aggravate her lung any further, and discarded it on her peptobismsal-pink duvet. Her tank top, she tossed in the trash, alongside copious amounts of empty bottles and crushed bags.

She plucked a loose white shirt from the floor (it was probably clean, anyhow), and slipped it over her head. Yes, she found upon smelling the hem, the shirt was clean. Recently clean, too. Someone had done her laundry while she was out and about. It didn't matter to her whom, and she wouldn't thank the mysterious clothes-cleaner, but the gesture was appreciated.

She fell into the swivel chair at her large desk, slumping against it with a heavy sigh.

"*Fuck*," Hana whispered, staring at her bedraggled reflection in the dark void of her lifeless gaming monitor.

Perhaps she would set up a stream. That would keep her mind off of things for a while. However, that also meant implementing D.Va into the situation, and the thought of doing that did not appeal to her at all. Now that she thought about it, nothing really seemed appealing. She wanted to sleep, she supposed, but that afternoon's shenanigans had ruined rest for her.

Perhaps she would merely doze for a while, then. Her eyelids were already falling shut, after all...

"Nice place you've got."

Hana's eyes snapped open and she gave a startled squawk. Her knees flinched upwards and banged against the underside of her desk with a loud *clang*, pain streaking up her right leg, which dragged a pained yelp from her lips. She caught a glimpse of Lena and Satya standing in her doorway before her forehead smacked against her keyboard. She clutched at her bruising knees, and did not move.

Everything was silent.

"Can I help you?" Hana croaked, turning her head to glare at the two women loitering awkwardly in the doorframe.

Lena gawked at her for a moment longer before blinking and shaking her head. "Er, sorry for startling you, but, er, you said we would, y'know, talk after the call?" The Brit scratched at the back of her neck. "I mean, if now's not a good time—"

Hana lifted her face from the keyboard and blew her bangs out of her face with a puff of air. "Now's fine."

Lena nodded with a mock-salute and blinked over to Hana's beanbag, nestled comfortably in the nearest corner. Satya, unsurprisingly, created herself a seat with just a wave of her hands and sat down primly.

She swiveled on her chair to face them, her guard high. A cold, weighted silence filled the room like water.

"So," Lena started, breaking the awkward layer of ice that had settled over them. "I'll get right to the point, if that's all right?" She received no response, and hesitated before continuing, almost as if testing the waters.

"Hana," she said, and Hana's hand twitched in response to the name. "Could you start at the beginning? Wherever that may be, for you. I guess, what I'm trying to say is that, maybe you could tell us what's been goin' on—" a pause. "Like, why are you so hostile towards Overwatch? Let's start there."

Hana looked away, averting her gaze towards the enormous white rabbit pillow on her bed. She debated lying, for a moment, but dismissed the thought quickly. Lying would get her nowhere. Honesty was the best way to handle this.

"It's because... Well, it's because you all have a tendency to treat me like a child," she said, turning back to the other two women, "You emphasize the fact that I am younger than you, and automatically assume that means I can't take care of myself or others. You call me child when I have asked," a grimace, "no, when I have *inferred* that I would like you to stop." She shrugged, crossing her good arm over her chest in a weak attempt to be flippant. "You disrespected me, humiliated me, and belittled me. I felt like I was worthless, useless, compared to you." A bitter smile. "I guess I still do. I haven't done shit for Overwatch since I joined."

"Not true," Lena exclaimed, aghast. "You sacrificed yourself to save Genji, Jesse, and Satya here just last week! You've completed some 60% of all the missions we've been given single-handedly. You sacrifice your blood, sweat, and breath to save the world every day. That's gotta count for something."

And Hana felt D.Va's words rise to her lips, a cold snake on her tongue. "I can't possibly atone for what I've done. Not by throwing my own life away and hoping it'll make up for the hundreds I've murdered."

Lena shook her head, tufty brown hair shaking with her. "We could argue about this all day, luv," the Brit said with a sigh. "Let's move on, for now. About that child thing— why does the title bother you? I mean, the being treated like a child is understandable, but why is being called a kid such a big deal?"

Hana glanced upwards, scrutinizing the two women before her. Lena looked confused and apologetic (but not pitying, she noted). Satya was expressionless, but seemed to be mulling over something silently.

"Child," she started, cautious, "is what my parents called me when I was young." Even the memory of it filled her with rage. "They never acknowledged me as 'Hana,' or as *their* child, just as *a* child, and a burden." Her glare was burning imaginary holes in her carpet. "It's what my commanding officers would call me whenever I stepped out of line. That damned title is a reminder of just how fucking incompetent I am."

Lena scowled, her face scrunching, frown twisting in agony and guilt. "Well, fuck," she Brit swore, throwing her hands in the air before burying her face in them. "And I made you feel like that? Bollocks."

Hana's heart twisted at the raw frustration and contrite evident in Lena's voice. She hadn't known, hadn't even stopped to consider the fact that maybe they didn't mean to make her feel like shit— it was new information and she didn't know what to do with it other than hold it tight.

Satya spoke up, then. "I would also like to apologize," said the architech. Hana noticed then that Satya's prosthetic arm had been replaced. "I played a part in disrespecting you by emphasizing your youth. I am sorry."

Hana shrugged. "It's fine," she said, and it wasn't, but it was time to move on. Nothing would come of holding onto these grudges.

Satya and Lena shared a glance before the architect asked the next question.

"Who is Hana Song?"

Hana remembered what D.Va had said before she left, about how she needed to choose who she was: Hana Song, or D.Va. And, well, now was the time to decide. She needed to give them an answer here and now, to validate herself. The more she thought about it, the more she realized how critical this was to moving forward, moving past the memories, the fear, and the grudges.

Was she Hana Song, the weakling, who had created D.Va as a protective shell from the horrors and hauntings of the world?

Was she D.Va, the quasar, who had created Hana Song as a means to excrete what was weak about her personality, striving for perfection?

She was too strong to be Hana, too weak to be D.Va. She wasn't a hybrid, but she wasn't at all different from either one.

She didn't know. She didn't know who she was anymore. (Had she ever known in the first place?)

"Hana Song," she started, choosing her words carefully. "Hana Song was who I was before the Korean Omnic disaster. She was... not prepared for war, or for fame. She was weak, and scared, and she... I like to think she's gone, now." She swallowed hard. "D.Va was who I was before Vík í Mýrdal. She was a self-defense mechanism, something created by Song to take the world one on one. And now..." She felt her gaze wander to the floor again, her voice quieting considerably. "Now, I'm not sure. Of who I am, or what I am, or what I'm supposed to do." She forced a laugh, though it sounded choked. "I don't know what to feel—I can't really convince myself to feel anything anymore. I feel disconnected, like something's missing, but I don't know what."

She stared at her hands—the warm one, on her right, and the pale, unfeeling one on her left. "I don't know what I want. I'm never hungry, always tired, but I can't sleep, or—" she cast a frantic, scared glance upwards at Lena, and Hana saw it click together like pieces of a puzzle in the Brit's mind. Lena's eyes widened; Hana couldn't hold that warm, understanding gaze, and looked down once more.

A heavy silence filled the room, heavier than before.

"I think... I understand what you're saying."

Hana's head snapped upwards in shock. It was Satya, of all people. The architect hesitated when she realized that she had the attention of both other women, but pressed onwards.

"Well, not the situation entirely, but I understand the feelings you have described. The feeling of feeling nothing, and being overwhelmed by everything simultaneously." Stay smiled, the minute movement shallow, her dulcet voice lilting warmly.

Lena tilted her head, her brows drawn together in deep thought. "Yeah," she said, quieter than Hana had ever heard her speak. "What you're talkin' about kinda reminds me of myself after the Slipstream accident." The Brit cracked a smile, but it was a tarnished, honest smile in all its age and weariness.

"To this day, I still don't know where I went in the aftermath, or how I came back. I never knew whether or not I was still alive, still existing. I never knew when or if I would eventually flicker out like a wick. I never felt anything but cold. Whenever I spoke, it felt like I was the only one in the world who could hear it." She chuckled, bringing her knees up to her chest.

"Sometimes, Winston or Angela would come in to the special room they had me rigged to, and then they would completely forget I was there, no matter how loudly I screamed."

Lena shuddered. "Stills gives me the jitters. Haunts me whenever my accelerator spazzes on the field."

Satya nodded.

"Chronic dissociation," the architech said, and Hana grimaced at the condemning tone in which it was spoken. It sounded like a disease, like something D.Va needed to file away as another imperfection requiring hiding.

Satya, however, seemed to read her mind.

"It's not a disease. It's not even anything to be ashamed of— it's merely a part of your character." The architech chuckled daintily. "I'm not going to tell you how to fix it— it's a part of who you are, and I will never understand it wholly, but that's what we're here to do. We *want* to understand, Hana."

Lena nodded vigorously. "Yeah. So, just talk about whatever. We want to learn more."

Hana faltered, there, her expression crumpling for the briefest of moments before she could recover the shattered pieces of herself and build them into something relatively whole.

"I— okay." She licked her lips. "Um, yeah. In the hallway. Lena, that dream I was having. I... I want to— no, need to talk about it."

Lena beamed. "We're listening."

Hana told them about what she saw in her sleep, about the ever-fading line between Hana and D.Va, about the Korean Omnic and Kim and Areum and how life was growing up. She talked and talked until she realized she had nothing left to say and everything to lose. She talked until her voice was broken and her heart was raw and all that she was was laid bare before these two women who she knew only sparingly.

And, in the end, it felt like she'd climbed mountains. It felt like she'd climbed Mount Everest summit to base and back again.

It felt amazing. The adrenaline was hot in her veins. In that moment, that split second of pure euphoria, it felt like she could do anything. She should have known.

Chapter End Notes

I could write about these three all day and nobody would be able to stop me.

- Ace.

homecoming

Chapter Notes

CW: ptsd

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Four weeks passed quickly. Hana tried to keep track of the days, she really did, but, ultimately, time blurred together in a haze of painkillers and flashing green lights. The only thing she knew of time was that she still had some. Not much, but some.

The time that had already passed had done her well. Her knee had healed cleanly, as had her eye, and her lung felt considerably better now. (The scar was ugly, blackened, and no doubt she would feel the slick shard of carbon fiber tearing through her skin every time she caught the scar's reflection in the mirror—)

She still couldn't feel her left arm, but at least she could somewhat move it now. Regularly, she saw Angela for physical therapy. They only did small exercises with the numbed appendage. Light flexes, writing simple words, eating. Progress was slow, but it was progress all the same. Of course, the injury had tampered with her ability to work efficiently, but her hands knew game controllers by instinct, and fighting was only as complicated as pulling the trigger.

Her ban on leaving Gibraltar had been lifted as soon as Angela gave the green light; she was allowed to go on missions again, although, as Jack had promised, she was restricted from going on too many in a certain period of time, and she had to update them constantly of any pains or phantom pains that ailed her. Should her lung start to burn, she would have to fall back. It was hard, admitting weakness, but she and Lena were working on rewriting her morals, but by bit. (Progress was slow, very slow. Hana honestly didn't know if they were getting anywhere, even though Lena promised that they were.)

And, well, she was getting better. Getting better in more ways than the physical and mental.

Hana was opening up more and more to the other members of Overwatch every day. The bitterness and frustration were fading as awareness of the situation spread between her teammates like wildfire. The dropping of the title 'child' disappeared completely, dare she say instantaneously. Rather, her teammates had instead taken to calling her 'rabbit.' The shift was jarring, rusty gears suddenly squeaky clean, but it was helping.

And, as much as things changed, some things stayed the same.

She still streamed, of course, it was her job, but her face felt lighter without the weight of as much makeup. All she put on nowadays was a light coat of lipgloss and some mascara.

She still rushed into the mob during fights, but she was more careful, now, more aware of her health. She had to be. Every nerve in her body was focused on the fight when in combat, and then, when done, she was able to (finally) relax.

She still couldn't sleep at night without seeing the ghosts of her past at every turn, but she knew that should anything drastic ever happen, Satya's door was always open. The architech had become her confidant, of sorts. As much as Hana spoke of every bloody nightmare, every

gruesome memory, Satya told of the horrors she'd commuted during her time in Vishkar that she had only become aware of once in Overwatch. These conversations were typically accompanied by coffee: one black with three spoonfuls of sugar and a swirl of coconut milk, and one mocha with a healthy dollop of whipped cream.

As of late, they had started preparing a mug of Earl Grey tea with a dash of agave extract, too.

Trust was a fickle thing, Hana discovered, past the fear. She discovered that it wasn't just now that she was gaining a family, that she'd had one all along. Lena, Satya, Angela, Fareeha... all the members of Overwatch were there to help her.

(Needing help did not make her weak, Angela said. And Hana was trying to believe that. She was trying her best.)

She trusted them. It was a slow process, earning trust and trusting in turn, but she was making progress, however minute.

There was still a problem. (Of course there was, Hana was a problematic existence—)

She hadn't yet told them about what would happen in six days' time. She hadn't yet told them that she was going to be gone in South Korea for a short while, to pay a visit and her overdue respects to her late parents. She hadn't found it in herself to tell them, not yet, though she knew she needed to.

Hana was scared— she was scared of ruining this tranquility she had only just gained. She was scared of losing herself to D.Va again, or Song. She was scared of falling apart.

And, as per usual, she didn't know what to do. That was really nothing new. She was lost, stranded, and there was nothing left to guide her but the ticking of a clock.

An opportunity presented itself to her the day before her departure for Busan.

It was raining. It'd been raining for three days straight. *Four, now*, Hana supposed as she tuned in yet again to the ever-constant drumming of rain against the metal and stone of Gibraltar's roof. The white noise was somewhat soothing to the nervous roar of her heart.

She was packing a small duffel bag: mostly just sparse clothing suited for late November and even fewer cosmetics. She didn't plan to stay for long, just long enough to say hello, linger for a day or two, before coming back. She still hadn't told anyone that she would be gone, and figured it was too late at this point. It was very likely that she would have to explain herself upon her return, and the thought did not appeal to her very much.

Well, it was what she got for being a coward.

She was just packing up her last shirt when her door slid open. Hana started and jerked around to face the intruder, a retort and a lie coiled on her lips before she saw who it was, and deflated.

"Hello," Fareeha said, cocking her head with a lopsided grin.

"Er..." Hana stuttered. "Hi."

Fareeha glanced at the duffel, then at Hana. "Going somewhere?"

Hana's mind had flatlined. Every train of thought had skidded to an abrupt and total stop. "Uh,

yeah."

Fareeha chuckled and stepped into the dim, messy room, the door sliding shut behind her. "Care to tell me where?"

"Home," she said, before she could even stop to consider the consequences of her answer. "There are some things I need to take care of."

Fareeha pondered this for a only moment before realization ignited her hawklike gaze like fire.

"Ah," said the broad Egyptian, nodding in understanding. "I see. I'll put in a word for you."

Hana blinked, bewildered. "Er, thanks."

Fareeha's grin softened. "I understand the importance of paying respects," she said. "I understand the need to go back, the urge to redeem yourself for something you couldn't control, to tell them what you've done in an attempt to make up for self-inflicted incompetence. The need to take the blame because if you don't, it will kill you. I know what it's like to look at an empty coffin, to read a familiar headstone over and over again in your head. Nobody will blame you for going. Everyone's lost someone." The Egyptian snorted softly. "For me, my mother. For Angela, her parents. For Lena, Gérard. For Zenyatta, his father. Reinhardt, his mentor. We all know the feeling." Fareeha placed a hand on her shoulder. "Do what you need to do."

Hana remembered, then. What she'd read about Ana Amari, how she'd died at the hands of Widowmaker, how her body had never been found, and that the only thing they'd recovered was a bloodstained slab of rock and a blue beret.

She forgot, sometimes, that the people she worked with had felt their fair share of loss. It was easy to forget— she'd been trained to focus on herself her entire life, to build the world around her, to be the sun to everyone's solar system.

She forgot, sometimes, that the universe was infinite, that there were other stars out there, equally broad, equally bright, equally on the verge of imploding.

To Fareeha, Hana nodded. "Okay," she said. "I will."

Hana left the next day, after dinner. She hijacked one of their smaller aircrafts, an impromptu hoverjet with tinted windows and a small cockpit, and jetted off into the night. The ocean was large and looming beneath her. She tried not to look down, because if she did, then she would see the dark water swirl and then cave and that great, gruesome head would rise from its depths. Every time she glanced down at the moonlit waves, her stomach would churn and then she was drowning all over again, cold, salty water in her lungs and her nose and it *burned*—

To her credit, she only threw up once.

Hana flew for sixteen hours straight— the hoverjet was not as fast as she'd hoped it'd be, but at least it had an autopilot function, and she set the coordinates she knew by heart into the dash before settling back. The seat was not comfortable, but sleep managed to find her, anyways. Of course, it was only due to sheer and utter exhaustion, but sleep was sleep.

In her sleep, Hana dreamed.

She dreamt she was crawling through the sand, spitting blood between her teeth. She dreamt of

fire and gunshots and her ears were ringing, ringing, ringing, and there was an explosion of red across her chest, pain in all that she knew, every fiber of her being screaming in agony.

She dreamt she was sinking; down, down, down, farther and father, blinking up at the surface of the inky black water and knowing there was no way out. The pressure pressed down on her ears, and she was cold, so cold, and the sound of cracking bones echoed in her broken ears.

She dreamt of the man in Daegu, of his wide, yellow eyes staring at her, full of wonder, full of fear as he peered down the barrel of her gun and he *knew* her and he died by her hand like a felon to a firing squad.

And, of course, as per usual, there were two graves looming from where they were imbedded in the earth, ghosts whispering beneath the confines of their headstones.

Hana woke up in cold sweat, floating over Gwangju, sick with fear and her breath vaporizing against the hoverjet's glass.

(To her credit, she only threw up twice. Once, over the ocean, the other in the small cockpit of a claustrophobic hoverjet.)

By the time she got to Busan, the sky had faded to black once more, but she could still see the entirety of the city thanks to the glare of the full moon.

Busan was as broken as she remembered. It was still in a state of heavy repair, and the farther towards the coastal side of the city she flew, the more and more apocalyptic the city became. She knew where she was going, but she hadn't anticipated drifting through a graveyard of a city to get there. Memories leered at her from the wreckage below, and she didn't look down, wouldn't look down, *couldn't* look down, lest she be consumed by them.

The jet beeped at her, wavering midair, before starting its descent. Hana scrabbled for the controls, and led it down.

She landed quickly, scraping the fuselage against the side of a fragmented home, and scrambled out of the sweaty cockpit as soon as the windshield slip open. She collapsed on the dead grass of the small, debris-laden yard that was only big enough to fit the jet itself. Her hands scrabbled against dirt and wood and she coughed, inhaling the cold, bitter air desperately.

(Busan was as broken as she remembered, and so was she.)

Her home hadn't changed at all since she'd last been there. The only changes were that it was dustier, emptier, and quieter. There was a horrible chunk taken out of the kitchen, a large gap of her childhood, gone. Cupboards hung ajar, porcelain in fragments on the floor, the reek of rotting food relying through the overwhelming scent of smoke. She didn't linger for long.

There were broken picture frames and shattered glass littering the ground, and her feet crunched over them as she ambled throughout the remains of her former home. A large portion of the second floor had caved in over the living room, enormous, wooden beams stabbed into the earth, and she remembered vividly that when she'd last come, her home had still been burning, and the smell of blood had still been crude on the air, and there was red dripping down the walls, fresh and glistening, and she knew that if she looked down, she'd see them, she'd see those dead,

unblinking eyes—

Hana moved on.

The dining room was relatively unharmed. It was still ashen gray, still littered with debris. Two of the chairs were overturned. The third was erect, rigid, standing a silent vigil over its fallen comrades. The chandelier lay in shambles on the table, broken glass having been strewn about the room upon its fall.

A memory came to her as she traced the edge of the table with her fingertips.

She and her mother sat at their dining table. Hana was no older than six, dressed in a red skirt and a white shirt, her cheeks smudged with something vibrant and pink. She was scribbling furiously at a piece of paper with a bright green crayon.

Her mother sat next to her, dressed in a black pencil skirt and a black blouse with a pretty silver necklace that reflected the morning light in a magical sort of way. Her mother was fixated on the laptop in front of her, finger tapping away carefully, without sound.

With a smack, the younger Hana set her crayons down on the dark wood of the table and held up the crinkled sheet victoriously. She popped out of her seat and scrambled to her mother's side.

"Momma, momma, look!"

The younger her held up the piece of paper with a wide grin, chest puffed up with pride.

Her mother turned to look at the paper slowly, her aged face void of emotion.

The young Hana watched with naive anticipation as her mother scanned the contents of the paper before asking, in a dull and disinterested tone, "What did you draw, Hana?"

Hana's grin faltered, only for a moment. "They're designs, momma."

Her mother hummed noncommittally. "What are they designs for?"

The young Hana lowered the sheet of paper nervously. "They're guns, momma," she said, her smile faltering. "I like drawing guns."

Her mother turned back to her computer, tapping away mechanically at the black keys.

"You shouldn't draw guns, Hana," her mother said. "Go get a new sheet of paper. Draw something pretty—like flowers. Yes, draw me something pretty, instead. I don't want pictures of guns in this house."

The younger Hana's smile fell completely. "Yes, momma." Her small, grubby hands reluctantly crumpled up the sheet of paper and placed it into the trash can nearby.

She had always been very good at drawing guns. Flowers were too complex for her, too curvy. She could never quite sketch their petals right or color them to exactness. Flowers were too colorful, yes. Guns were easy. They were all sharp angles, all rigid lines.

But her mother had asked for flowers. Hana would draw them. She would make them colorful. This time, she would get it right.

Hana blinked, disturbed, and retracted her hand. She left the room quickly, the whispers of her history fading behind her as turned towards the broken staircase leading upstairs. Each step

creaked underfoot as she ascended, almost as if they would give out at any time.

The upstairs hallway was short and threadbare. Two doors marred its emptiness. One, white, looming. The other, bloody, broken. Hana turned towards the white one, hands trembling as her knees threatened to give out.

(Don't go in there, Song begged. Please, please—)

The door opened with a long, quiet shriek.

Her old bedroom smelled of must and ash. Her bed was blackened at the foot. The roof had been torn away, bathing her in the chill of the night air. Old photographs lined the dresser, her closet hanging ajar, stinking of death.

There was a pistol on the floor. She picked it up, its smooth grip familiar in her hand. Hana set it on her desk, on top of bits of wire from her broken computer. Her numb fingers brushed over bolts and plastic and over the rims of crushed, discarded cans of soda. Her gaze wandered over the singed walls, over the soiled floorboards, over every crack in the seams of the walls.

"Mom," she croaked, feeling tears streak down her cheeks. "Dad, I'm home."

Hana's knees went slack, and she collapsed onto her bed, asleep before her head even hit the pillow.

Her and her father, this time in Hana's parents' bedroom.

"What are you doing over there, Hana?"

Nine-year-old Hana winced, the crayon pressing into the piece of paper coming to an abrupt stop.

"Drawing, papa," she said in soft Korean, hesitating only for a heartbeat.

"What are you drawing?" her father asked lazily.

Hana looked down at her drawing. A blurry man made of inky black scribbles was pointing a gun at a white rabbit. There were red patches bleeding all over the page. In the corner, a child was crouched, crying.

"Flowers, papa," she said, putting away her crayons. "It's a very pretty picture."

"What color are the flowers, Hana?"

Hana crumpled the drawing and tossed it into the trash can with a disheartening thud.

"Red," she said, packing her book-bag and standing to leave. "Big, red flowers, blooming all over the ground. It's very pretty. You would like it."

"It sounds wonderful. Hang it up on the fridge, child."

Hana closed the door behind her and let her fingers linger on the handle, a deep sadness burrowing deep into her soul.

"Whatever you say, papa," she said, letting go of the door and traipsing off down a monochrome gray hall.

Breakfast was small: a granola bar and a pear. She ambled back through her broken, burned house to the hoverjet, and clambered inside its tight premises.

The windshield slid shut. The engines roared to life. Hana lifted upwards, off of the ground, and into the air, leaving the house full of memories behind her as she rose into the sky.

Today was the day. Suddenly, all that had happened before now seemed irrelevant. There was only her, the hoverjet, the miles separating her from her destination, and all of her time that was running out.

Chapter End Notes

Things got better briefly but then I had to go and do that one thing.

Soon, my lads. The last bump is coming but first we need to trudge through this wet-cement material here of Hana fighting old demons.

Your comments are appreciated! So much! I could never stress how much your feedback means to me enough. You are all wonderful.

AAALSO I don't have a beta but if you'd like to hit me up ok? I try my best to catch every error and make sure that the story flows but I can't get them all. I'm only human.

(And autocorrect is a little bitch.)

See you next chapter y'all.

- Ace.

old wounds

Chapter Notes

chapters will be updating not as frequently now because school is a bitch and that's all also, i wrote this when sick and i'm not proud of it but :///

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

She had woken that morning with a fever. At the time, she'd deemed it harmless.

Busan was broken, a puzzle with all its pieces in disarray. Some parts whole, other parts lost and never to be found. Truly, drily, ironically, a place she used to call home.

Alone in the air, she felt small, smaller than when her parents had stomped her sprouting childhood into the ground when she tried to defy them, smaller than when she'd told Angela everything in a steamy, scar-laden shower room. Smaller than when she sank like a stone beneath the East Sea's black waves, alone in the dark, the pressure of the water strangling the air from her lungs, her body left to shrivel in her roseate cage.

Smaller than— oh, she felt smaller than anything, everything, and nothing all at once. Smaller than the fragmented pieces of herself that she had yet to recollect.

Busan was a broken, broken city, washed through the wringer and the seven rings of hell. An ocean, of sorts, built on waves ash and decay. And she would not, *could* not, look down at the cyclopean footprints, sundered deep into the earth.

It would be a few hours until the graveyard. In silence, and because they had nothing else to do, her eyelids fell shut.

The graveyard, unsurprisingly, was empty. Well, not *empty*, per se, simply vacant. The sky was black like tar with smoke and storm clouds, the taste of rain lingering in the air. No doubt, there would soon be a downpour. All the more reason for her to go in and be done with it more quickly.

Yet, she couldn't move. She could hardly breathe. Standing there at the entrance of the cemetery, the hoverjet parked vigilant behind her, she couldn't muster the courage to step into the labyrinth of lost names, forgotten faces, and rotting bones buried beneath soil. She was terrified— terrified of what she would see, of what she would remember, and who she would walk out of the cemetery as when done paying her respects.

Would she be Hana, D.Va, or Song? Would she break beneath the revenant gazes of her deceased parents, or would she burn and consume herself with rage and contempt? The fear of these 'what-ifs' and 'would-shes' was encompassing her, and the longer she lingered the farther away from Busan she wanted to be.

Hana was lost in thought, but she was not unobservant.

Footsteps approached from behind her, heavy footfalls crunching over dry, dead grass. It was obvious that the intruder had a limp, a bad one at that, and was not at all trying to hide the appearance of their presence; that was either a very good or very bad thing, and Hana didn't know which. Her hand reached for the gun tucked into the waistband of her pants, pulling it to her side.

The footsteps came to a stop beside her. The conversation she had on the Black-Sand Beach came to mind, and for a moment, she thought that perhaps it was Fareeha who had come to join her, though she knew, in truth, that it wasn't. She was in Busan, not Iceland. Iceland was on the other side of the world and it wasn't in a state of chaos like South Korea.

"You've been standing there for a while," said the intruder. Hana's heart leapt into her throat and she choked, the gun clattering to the dry soil underfoot in her startle. "Either you're waiting for someone in there, or someone in there is waiting for you." A chuckle, soft, familiar. "Knowing you, it's the latter."

Hana whirled, mouth agape, eyes wide.

Fire, and blood, and a twisted, mangled, body stuck in a crushed, metal prison, bones cracking and oh god the screams—

Standing before her, not two feet away, was Areum.

(Busan was as broken as she remembered, and so was she, and so was Areum, for that matter.)

The younger woman wore sweatpants and a jumper with the sleeves rolled up, revealing a red and gray prosthetic arm. Her short hair was the same as Hana remembered, and everything was the same except Hana knew the scars that lied beneath those clothes, knew that the prosthetic for her leg must be only a few weeks old judging by the limp, knew that the gauze eyepatch bore a gaping hole beneath it, raw and red and *it was all her fault, wasn't it?*

She swallowed hard, collected herself, felt her heart drop to her stomach, and spoke.

"Areum," she said, voice weak. "Nice to see you again."

It wasn't. It wasn't pleasant. This would not be a candid reconciliation— they both knew that, but Hana was proud and polite and suffering and Areum didn't know, didn't need to know, shouldn't be here, couldn't—

Areum smiled, nodding towards the cemetery. "It's that time of year again, right? We're here for the same reason, I suppose, just for different people, yeah?"

Hana took a step back, fully intent on fleeing because this was shit, it was going to fall apart, and she knew it wouldn't be long now before she broke. "I guess."

Areum took several paces forward and grabbed Hana's hand before she could reach for the hoverjet.

"We're going in," said the younger woman, firm.

Hana bit her tongue, eyes burning. Song was screaming, somewhere, and D.Va had gone shock-still at the sight of her former teammate, former friend, and now she was alone in this. Hana, who was new and raw and still trying to figure things out.

She wrenched her arm away, reeling back.

"No," she spat. "You can't be here. You're—" *Dead? Supposed to be dead?* "—I need to go. I'm not going in there."

Areum frowned, reaching forward with her prosthetic arm, *damn* that prosthetic, speaking in a gentle tone.

"D.Va," she said, and she didn't know anything, she couldn't even pretend to know and somehow that was worse, "you can do this. I don't know what demons you're fighting, but you can do this."

Oh, how patronizing she sounded, despite being younger and despite knowing nothing; she sounded as if she knew everything— Hana hated it, *hated* that tone, because she didn't need anyone's pity (and surely it was pity, right? It had to be.).

Hana fumbled for the gun she had dropped earlier and held it before her, less as a threat to kill and more as a means to keep distance between them.

"Don't you dare," she seethed. "Don't you dare pretend to know what I'm dealing with. Don't you *fucking* dare, Areum."

Areum was undaunted, remaining eye blazing, and took a step forward. Hana flicked off the safety of the gun instinctively, and retreated a step backwards. The world was swaying, rocking like a boat at sea. It was making her sick.

"I'm only trying to help," Areum said.

"Fuck off," Hana growled, gun trembling in her hand not from fear, but from rage. "Why the fuck are you trying to help me, anyways? You hate me, right?"

Hana didn't know if she was relapsing, evolving, or withering, because D.Va was still paralyzed and Song hadn't screaming and Hana, Hana was broken, just as she had always been, always would be. It was her curse, an endless cycle of breaking and healing and it was *killing her*.

"I don't hate you," the younger woman said, forcibly calm. Hana barked out a sharp, sardonic laugh.

"Don't forget," she exploded, voice hoarse like broken glass scraping against a chalkboard, like gravel, like a shard of carbon fiber scraping between flesh and bone, "that I left them to die, Areum. They're all *dead* because of me."

Areum didn't respond, instead pursing her lips and retracting her hand. Hana continued, too far lost in this void of apathy.

"I gave the order to make Yu-Ri and Hye retreat. I abandoned Sang, Ye-Jun, and Il-Seong on that rock face. I left them to die." She sucked in a breath, lowering the pistol to stare at its metallic hide. "I let you get crushed, not calling off the attack sooner. I'm the reason you can't walk without bleeding or see without knowing something's missing." She laughed, heartsick. "I watched Kim fall and I could have caught her, but I didn't. I watched Busan burn, watched my *parents* burn, watched Satya and Jesse and Genji bleed because I was *too fucking slow*. And it's too late now.

"I have no right to face them," Hana said, or croaked, or sobbed— she couldn't tell which,

couldn't convince herself to care anymore. "I've taken everything they made me and shattered it. Everything they've taught me, defiled. And it's too late." The rain pelted her shoulders, soaking through her shirt instantaneously. "It's too late to apologize. I've fucked up everything indescribably and everyone says it's healing but I *know* better, and it's not, and I'm still the same fuck-up I was five weeks ago."

Areum's confusion was crystalline on her face, and she opened her mouth, but Hana struck before she could.

"Don't you dare say it's okay," she roared over the rain. "It's not. I know. It's *my* fault that they're dead and *you're* like this. It's *not* okay, and it *never will be*, and I can't go in there because I *know* that."

"It was your fault," Areum screamed over the storm. "I'm not going to lie. They died because of you. But you want to know the funny thing? I *forgive* you!"

Hana snorted. "As if *your* forgiveness is the answer to all my problems. How can you forgive me if I can't even *forgive myself*!?"

Areum's expression crumpled. "What happened to you, D.Va? What happened to you when you left?"

Hana took another step back, her numb hand resting on the wing of the hoverjet. "It doesn't matter," she bristled. "And it's none of your fucking business, anyways."

"You're right," echoed the younger woman, "it's not. But I'm not letting you walk away until you do what you came here to do."

Hana bit her lip, the gun in her hand rattling, the rain cold against her skin. Was it worth the fight to get away? Was it worth the pain to give up?

(D.Va was frozen, Song was screaming, and Hana was unable to convince herself that she could handle this alone.)

"I'm not going in there," she said, raising the gun once more. "You can't make me."

Areum spread her arms wide. "What, are you actually going to shoot me?"

Her chest burned, her arm was still numb and she couldn't feel her lips. "If I must."

"Then take the shot, because I'm not letting you run away again."

Areum took a step forward. Out of reflex, Hana's numb fingers squeezed the trigger, the gunshot loud like thunder and ringing in her ears. Blood exploded across the grass, the rain like ice on her skin. Hana screamed and fell to her knees and *she'd gone and done it again, she'd killed someone else she knew and loved, and it was all her fault—*

She had woken with a fever. At the time, she'd deemed it harmless.

When Hana kicked herself awake, there was blood in her mouth and sweat on her neck, and her stomach roiled and she took the hoverjet to the earth to empty the contents of her stomach once more.

The graveyard, unsurprisingly, was empty. Well, not empty, per se, simply vacant. The sky was black like tar with smoke and storm clouds, the taste of rain lingering in the air. No doubt, there would soon be a downpour. All the more reason for her to go in and be done with it more quickly.

She did.

Dead grass crunched underfoot as she weaved between headstones, a light rain drizzling down on her slouched form and she trekked through the cemetery. In one corner, there was a hill, and she climbed it with relative ease. A particular weariness had settled in her bones.

And there they were. The two headstones that haunted the very core of her existence.

"Dad," she greeted, voice hoarse and quiet and rough with sickness. "Mom. Nice to see you again." It wasn't. It wasn't pleasant at all. This would not be a candid reconciliation.

"What do you say?" she huffed, a short, bitter laugh. "Are you guys proud of me yet? Now that I'm all you told me not to be? Are you proud?"

She glared down at the unresponsive marble, eyes stinging with tears as the rain began to patter across the stone.

"Look at what you've done," she hissed. "You broke me. I hope you know that, and I hope you're ashamed, because look at what you've done to me. I can't make friends without feeling the scars you gave me ache, I can't accept help without feeling weak. I can hardly look at myself in the mirror anymore without seeing you, you, who took me and fucked me up in every way you could."

She laughed, or choked, or sobbed.

"You were god-awful parents. I hope you know that. You sucked ass. You didn't even acknowledge me as your own child. We weren't a family, never were, and I have a family now and you're dead but you still *broke me*."

Hana closed her eyes, letting the rain wash over her, letting it soak through her jacket and hair.

"This is it," she croaked. "After this, I'm not going to come back. I hate you, I hate you both, and this is killing me. I'm not going to see you after this. This... this is goodbye." She swallowed hard. "I've said what I needed to say. I don't need you two anymore. I'm ready to move on."

Her fists clenched and whitened in her pockets. Her body was trembling, tears dripping down her cheeks.

"I won't miss you. You know that. You won't miss me either; you never did."

The pistol, she drew from the back of her pants and set it between the two headstones.

"I don't know how to say goodbye," she admitted quietly, standing and turning to leave. "So I'll just say you fucking sucked, because you don't deserve the courtesy of a proper send-off."

She glanced backwards, capturing the image of the two rain-sodden graves in her mind, let herself scan their pale surfaces one last time.

"Bye, Mom," she said. "Bye, Dad. Go to hell."

And she left, meandering back through the labyrinth of graves and names, back through the rain, back past the fence, and into the hoverjet, which whirred with heat.

Once inside, she crumpled, curling in on herself and sobbing so hard she could barely breathe.

(The last time she had cried this hard was Vík í Mýrdal, but somehow it was worse this time, because she was sick and alone and more broken than she'd ever been.)

Hana picked up the hoverjet's communicator, pressing the button when her sons had died down enough for her to be coherent.

"D.Va to Gibraltar, please respond," she murmured, voice wavering, on the verge of giving out entirely.

Almost instantly, there was a response.

"*Hana*," Satya breathed on the other end, thick with relief. "*What do you need?*" Satya didn't ask where she was, or why she was there. The question was only about what she needed, and what she could do to help. Hana had forgotten how nice it was: their serendipitous relationship of helping each other heal.

"I did it," she wheezed, tired and raw but also giddy with elation. "They're gone."

Satya exhaled, an allayed sigh. "*Are you coming back?*" The architech asked gently.

"Yeah," Hana said, voice cracking. And then, raw with content, "I'm coming *home*, Satya."

She set the communicator back in its hold, gripped the controls in her hands— one warm, one numb —and ascended into the blackened, stormy sky.

She flew for twenty-two hours. Twenty-two hours of herself, the hum of the hoverjet's engines, and the ocean, before she arrived at Watchpoint: Gibraltar. When she landed, Fareeha was there, waiting for her.

"Hey," said the Egyptian as she drew Hana in for a hug. "Lena's starting up a shower for you. Mei is making lunch. Should I tell her to save you a plate?"

Hana blinked, and then slumped into Fareeha's embrace with a battle-worn sigh. "Yeah," she echoed, a small smile cracking on her dry lips. "Sounds perfect."

Chapter End Notes

Y'all are wonderful and I'm suffering because this story makes me emotional and I don't have much to say this week so until next time folks, as I'm sick.

Also, betaing will start next week once I can figure out the best way to contact y'all and send you the chapters.

- Ace.

fragmentation

Chapter Notes

tfw the internet is 10x more complex than it needs to be

anyways happy halloween guys

CW: blood.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The kitchen was almost entirely empty when Hana managed to pull herself out of the shower, her hair recently dried and a small towel still hanging around her neck. A plate of food covered in Saran Wrap was waiting for her, as was a steaming mug of what smelled like coffee. No doubt, the coffee was Satya's doing. The thought made a weary smile quirk the corner of her lips upwards, but the smile faded quickly when she realized that she wasn't alone.

"Greetings," hummed Satya pleasantly, sipping at her own mug.

"Satya," Hana croaked, taking the towel from around her neck and setting it on the counter shakily. "It's—" she forced a smile, all of the stress of the past few days hitting her in one instant. "It's good to see you again."

The architech set her mug down beside her and stepped forward. "Do you want anything?" she asked carefully.

Hana laughed, sharp and sudden and weak all at once. "Yeah," she said. "First and foremost, I'd appreciate a hug."

Satya needed no further incentive, swooping forward and catching Hana just as her knees decided that the lack of sleep she'd been getting and the weight of her sins was too much for them to bear. Hana's hands clutched at the architech's shirt tightly, and the older woman's arms around her neck were a safe, grounding force.

"I must be blessed," Hana joked, sniffing heavily into Satya's shirt as her eyes welled. "To think that I get a hug from *the* Satya Vaswani. I dare say I'm the first in history. It must be a sign of good things to come."

Satya huffed and rolled her eyes, but Hana knew she was smiling. "Don't test me."

Hana snorted, and then sniggered, and then she was full-on laughing into the architech's shirt. After a moment, Satya joined her, chuckling quietly.

"I fucking did it, Satya," Hana gasped out between bursts of laughter. "I did it, after nineteen whole *fucking* years. I can—I can *move on*."

"You did it," Satya confirmed. "I'm proud of you."

Hana grinned and rubbed her eyes with the back of her hand. "You know what?" she said, "I'm a little proud of myself, too."

(And that's how Lena found them, clinging to each other like tomorrow would never come. The Brit didn't need any invitation to join in.)

Things got better. Lena and Satya were her pillars of support, and she relied on them heavily nowadays, but it wasn't embarrassing anymore; it wasn't anything to be ashamed of. And when Angela kissed her forehead sometimes after missions, she knew it was less because of her youth, and more because of what a good job she'd done. And when she saw Fareeha and Angela kissing softly in the kitchen at midnight some nights, it wasn't repulsion that she felt, but inner peace.

Zenyatta was a good teacher. The rough edges of her battered soul, the Omnic was helping to smooth over. He taught her that breathing was a good way to calm down. In, and out. In, and out. Three seconds to inhale, eight seconds to exhale. Most days, they went over mental exercises and were just starting to identify potential triggering thoughts, words, and actions.

Missions got easier, like knotted muscles beneath a skilled, steady palm. She hadn't regained full feeling in her left hand, and she doubted she ever would, but she could move it just as efficiently as her right hand now. The dreams were still hell, of course they were; there was little she could do to prevent them, too, because they were memories, but she had multiple working methods of recovery for the bad nights. And, because it helped her stay organized and because Satya had insisted, she divided bad nights into three columns: East Sea, Busan, and Kashgar.

Nights where she dreamt of the East Sea and the colossal Omnic that had laid waste to her homeland, she went to Satya. Nights where she dreamt of her shitty, empty childhood, she went to Angela (and/or Fareeha). Nights where she dreamt of Kashgar, she saw Lena. At first, she was hesitant to comply with this system, but she fell into it easily after a particularly jarring nightlife recreation of what happened in the Taklamakan Desert.

Every step forward was another bandaid over old wounds that were just starting to stitch themselves together. Every day that passed was a step towards a better, healthier life. The system she and Satya had created was working wonders on her mental state.

(Nothing lasted forever, she knew, but she hoped that *this*, at least, would stay.)

It happened suddenly, almost instantaneously. Like a bomb once thought to be a dud suddenly imploding as soon as she went to pick it up. This time, it snuck up on her, which was somehow worse than anticipating the end only to never have it come.

It started with a mission gone wrong in St. Petersburg, one that she wasn't even a part of, and suddenly, the gauze strips on her healing heart were ripped wide open, her body freezing in response. She hadn't even known what spurred the limbic reaction. Or, more accurately, there were too many options for her to decide.

Maybe it was the way Jesse hobbled off of the ORCA, bleeding from the leg, met her gaze, and veered away towards Genji who was waiting for him somewhere nearby. Maybe it was the way Aleksandra placed a hand on her shoulder and squeezed it in reassurance as she passed before wandering off to her own significant other, their voices growing hushed behind Hana as they left the hangar.

Maybe it was the way Jack stepped off of the ramp, pinning Widowmaker's arms behind her back and leading her in the general direction of the brig— Widowmaker, who had a noticeably broken arm and black blood dripping from a gauge in her forehead, the likely cause being a piece of metal from her savaged visor.

Maybe it was the way Lena lay splayed on the stretcher, goggles discarded, a heavy bruise forming across the bridge of her nose, her body flickering in and out of reality, no thanks to the broken choral accelerator that rested atop her motionless chest. Maybe it was the blood splashed across the Brit's torso, the red trails leaking from her parted mouth. Maybe it was the way Angela brushed past her, all righteous fury and panic in the tenseness of her shoulders, caduceus staff in one hand, syringe in the other.

Maybe it was the way the way time seemed to flow on without her and she was left frozen, paralyzed, left to stare in horror at Lena's body, with no idea whether or not her friend was dead or alive. Maybe it was the way her heart stopped and her throat contracted and everything felt like it was caving in, withering, and cold, and she was drowning in the bitter winter air, unable to breathe in, unable to breathe out.

Maybe it was the way that even when everyone else had filed out and the hangar was empty, she still stood there, unmoving, eyes trained on the blood that stained the metal floor, a present reminder that it was *Lena's* life on the line, Lena, who had never doubted her, not even for a second, and now...

Hana didn't know what the cause was, and she didn't know why, but she figured it must be because fate sure had a funny way of *fucking* with everything going right in her life.

She should have stayed in Busan. She should have pulled the trigger when she had the chance. She was a danger to everyone else around her. All she brought was blood and death to those around her.

(And that was how Satya found her, standing in the same spot she'd been for the past hour and a half, staring at the bloodied ground with wide, unfocused eyes, one hand resting over the blackened scar over her left lung, the other hanging limp at her side, reaching for a gun that wasn't there anymore.)

It was three days of surgery, stress, and *Ener-Z* energy drinks before she received news that Lena would *probably* (as if that was reassuring, Hana thought with a sneer) make it. Hana hadn't slept in 62 hours, and had eaten sparsely in that period of time, and the news did little to quell the paranoia eating her from the inside out. Angela also told her that she was allowed to visit at any time, and that she should try to get some sleep.

Hana couldn't sleep, not with Lena's life on the line, but she couldn't just sit around and do nothing anymore.

(She knew where to go. It was a visit 62 hours overdue.)

She left her room at 0200 hours, dressed in track pants and the pre-assigned black, white, and orange Overwatch t-shirt. Her hair was bedraggled, dark circles hanging under gaunt eyes. With her, she brought only a half-empty bottle of *Ener-Z*, a protein bar, a passcode she'd discovered in the dustier files of the archives, and her light pistol.

The brig was much like the rest of Watchpoint: Gibraltar in terms of appearance, perhaps a little darker, a little blander. The only noticeable difference was that it was one: the only basement-oriented room in the whole base, and two: it was very, very heavily guarded.

"Athena," she called out to the heavy, unmoving door. "I'm here to interrogate our guest: access code 17620-A5."

The door opened with a low, dense hum. Much different than the quiet hisses of doors elsewhere in the base, she supposed, moving down the dark stairway carefully, bare feet pattering on the metal steps, her path illuminating before her the farther down she traveled. At the base, there was another door, which she opened with only a tug of the handle and led to a long, sparse hallway made of cement as opposed to the modern-esque feel of the rest of Gibraltar. The hallway was lined with cast-iron doors and keypads all glowing blue, save for one glowing red on the far side.

That must be the one, she thought, pacing down the hallway with little effort and pressing her hand against the scarlet keypad. The door opened with a groan after a short moment.

(And there she was.)

Widowmaker shot upright as soon as Hana stepped inside, the door closing behind her, dim lights flicking on overhead.

"What do you want," the Talon agent seethed, posture guarded as she stood from the cot. Hana noted that her arm was in a sling and that a gauze patch had been placed over the incision on her head. Her visor was missing, but she still wore the raunchy purple outfit trademark to her figure.

Hana set down her protein bar and beverage carefully before drawing the light pistol from the back of her pants. "I'm only here to get a few answers, s'all," she said, monotonous in tone to keep herself from exploding at the elder woman. "I'll cut the chase, if it makes it easier for you." She raised the pistol, as a certain threat of death should Widowmaker fail to comply. (Hana knew she was breaking at least twelve Overwatch rules by doing this, but she was angry and tired and terrified for the friend she'd almost lost.)

"Did you do it? Is she going to die?" she asked.

Widowmaker's eyes narrowed. "I don't know what you're talking about."

Her hair-trigger temper surging, Hana rushed forward, taking Widowmaker by the midsection and pinning her to the wall by the throat.

"Don't you *dare* fucking play ignorant," she snarled, jabbing the gun further into her bruise-colored collarbone. "I'll ask again— *did you shoot her?*"

Widowmaker was quiet, her unnaturally golden eyes scanning Hana's face, seemingly undeterred by the elbow pressing into her windpipe and the nozzle at her chin. "I did."

"You could have killed her," Hana hissed. "She almost *died* because of you. Do you know what that means to me? Do you have any idea what that would have done?"

The Talon agent remained silent.

"You *hurt* her. You don't even know the impact of what you've done. She still might die and it'll be *your* fault." Hana squeezed her eyes shut. "And it will *ruin me*."

She released her arm from the Frenchwoman's throat and backed away, slumping against the far wall as Widowmaker inhaled deeply.

"You don't understand," she croaked, watching as the other's golden eyes snapped upwards to meet her gaze in surprise. "I can't lose anyone else. I've lost *everything* and I'm just starting to find it again, and I won't let you take her from me. She's important, and if she dies, I'm going to kill you."

"Then why not kill me now and get it over with sooner?" Widowmaker spat. "You think I don't have regrets? You think I don't understand? I murdered my own *husband*, for god's sake." The Frenchwoman chuckled, dry, morose. "If I did not have regret for what I have done, do you really think your friend would still be alive? Do you think I would not have fought back if I did not think that I deserved to die? My life is meaningless to me. I know what I've done."

Hana scoffed, reaching for her *Ener-Z* blindly and taking a swig. "That's funny. You're starting to sound like me several months ago."

Widowmaker scowled. "What do you want from me? You didn't come here to kill me."

Hana grabbed the protein bar, then, and tossed it to the other woman, who caught it with a startled expression. "You're right," she said. "I didn't come here to kill you. Lena... you used to mean a lot to her. She looked up to you. Did you know that? Which, I mean, is funny, because now she's at death's doorstep because of you." She laughed and ran a hand through her matted hair. "I'm just... scared, I guess. I don't want her to die and I need the closure. I asked you before, but I'll rephrase it this time: I need to know whether or not the shot was fatal."

Widowmaker opened her mouth, but Hana held up a hand to stop her. "You're a sniper," she said. "You know what your own bullets are capable of, so save the bullshit for Yankee Doodle's interrogation session tomorrow."

The older woman paused, and then sighed and began the careful process of unwrapping the protein bar. "I did not shoot to kill. I walked into that fight knowing full well I would be surrendering."

Hana released a breath she hadn't known she'd been holding. "Thanks," and then, "Athena, open the door." The door slid open, old gears moaning in protest.

In the doorway, she hesitated. "It takes time to find something worth living for," she said, glancing back at the tattered agent lingering on the metal cot. "I... I hope you find that something, someday."

The last thing she saw before the door closed was those golden eyes widening, face contorting with anguish and contrite, and then her gaze was met with cold, black steel.

As Hana had expected, the medical bay was empty when she got there. The clock on the wall read 02:56. Not surprising, all things considered, but that wasn't really important. Her mind was not at all focused on the time or the place, but rather the person lacking shock-still on the downy bed that Hana had been laying in upon returning from Kashgar.

Lena looked worse for wear. She bore several IVs in her right arm and a bloodbag stood its vigil at the side of her bed. There was a plastic mask over her mouth and bruised nose. Her choral accelerator was nowhere in sight, but her body wasn't flickering as it had been when she'd exited the ORCA. Around her chest, there was stark white gauze, tainted red between her left collarbone

and shoulder. Her chest rose and fell in shallow breaths.

Honestly, it was a terrifying sight.

"Hey, Lena," she greeted quietly, taking a seat with a wince in the familiar metal chair at the bedside. "I didn't come here with anything to say, so I hope being here will suffice for now." Another glance at that pale, unmoving face, and Hana's expression crumpled.

"You can't die," she rasped. "I need you too much. You know that." She sucked in a breath and squeezed her eyes shut, clasped hands clenching together. "I'll be here when you wake up," she promised, bowing her head. "No matter how long it takes."

(She didn't sleep, for fear of what she would see if she closed her eyes for too long. She was at 63 hours, and the edges of her vision were starting to warp, but she would wait an eternity if that's how long it took.)

Chapter End Notes

depression and ADD have been bitches but i'm still trying my best to update consistently instead of doing my homework lmao

@me why are you like this

anyways see you in the next edition and remember to stay safe this halloween y'all

- Ace.

on thin ice

Chapter Notes

i'm p unsatisfied with this chapter but i put so much effort into it so here you go.

also guys sombra is mcfreakin out and i'm hopeless

CW: a lot of shit but mostly dark thoughts and gore

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

What she had expected was a relapse. She was right in expecting it, and when it happened, she was able to counter it effectively.

What she hadn't expected was the fallback. She'd known that her body would instinctively try to cave in to protect itself and let D.Va shine forth so that her fragile heart would not again be broken; she didn't let it. Hana kept herself tied to her name, to the state of mind she was finally settling into, one where she was weaker in heart, but stronger as a whole.

She hadn't known that in doing this, in trapping herself in such a vulnerable state, she would trigger an even more violent reaction. She couldn't touch anyone without her body jumping back. Easily, she was overwhelmed, and she got sick when exposed to too much at once. Her body harbored a natural repulsion to weakness, branded into her bones by her parents, no doubt. It had been laying in wait for her, waiting for her to embrace the fact that she was afraid before striking.

It was heart-wrenching. The more she tried to force herself to be around the others, the more her body would freeze in the doorway to the common room, not allowing her to enter. It was often her breath would catch in her throat when in the presence of others, and she would often have to leave before her mentality collapsed entirely.

She knew from the moment she healed it would be a bomb-like contingency until she formed enough calluses, and now the fuse was lit, her hands were still raw, and she was slipping on the ice beneath her feet. Hana was trying to stomp out the flames, but her efforts were futile. The ice beneath her was too thin. She was crashing and burning and there wasn't really much she felt she could do other than watch her empire crumble.

(*Again*, which was sad at this point, and she wondered why she kept on trying when obviously nothing worked for longer than a week.)

Satya claimed to understand the feeling. The architech told her to take as much time as she needed, and suggested that perhaps going on missions would help, because success made one feel strong. Since the cause was aversion to weakness, then finding strength, finding whatever put her feet back beneath her, was something worth trying.

In a more poetic sense, "Why try to douse the flames when cutting the fuse is much more easy and effective?"

And it struck Hana, then, how Satya managed to stand so strong under intense waves of pressure, how she always kept herself collected, even when shit hit the fan. Satya was entirely detached from her emotions, keeping the way she felt and the way she reacted on polar opposite sides of the

earth. Hana wondered how much it hurt doing that, and wondered if the pain of smothering her personality was worth the reward of keeping herself put together.

(Yes, was the immediate response. *Absolutely.*)

So, the fuse was cut. Hana trusted Satya enough to believe in this potentially harmful strategy. Or, at least, she wanted to believe it would work, but she didn't know; she was only holding herself together by a hairpin. Her rationality was clouded by sparse sleep haunted by oceans of blood and bodies. That being said, cutting herself off from emotion was the most sound plan she'd had offered to her yet, and like a moth to light she flocked to it. (Desperation was driving her mad— as if she wasn't enough of a fuck-up already.)

Lena hadn't woken up, and it had been five days already, and she wondered if this was how the others had felt when she was reeled in from Kashgar. It was a horrible feeling. Looking down at Lena's sickly pale face, bruised and sunken as opposed to its typical luster... It was haunting. All the more reason to numb the pain, she supposed, though she was still ambivalent about the whole thing.

(Oh, who was she fooling but herself? Every second of every day was agonizing, images of Lena's pale, blood-freckled face plaguing her. She would do anything, anything at all, to not have to deal with that pain.)

Healing was a tiring process, a repetitive cycle of 'two steps forward, one step back.' Now, there was an impasse. She wouldn't let herself relapse, not with how far she'd come, but realistically, there was nothing she could do to move forward until Lena was back on her own two feet. Which was another problem.

Widowmaker had said that the shot was not fatal, but what was to say that it wasn't permanent? There were chances. Chances that something would go wrong, that the Brit would never wake up. That she wouldn't be able to fight again. Angela was a legend in medical science, but, like Hana's severed nerves, there were impossibilities, things that science simply could not save.

Rarely, she left Lena's side, because if one of those *somethings* went wrong, then at least there would be someone to blame.

(However, after 148 hours without sleep, Satya towed her away from the medical bay. The next day, she was put back in commission, because the others knew how badly she needed a distraction.)

In England, she, Lúcio, and Zenyatta attended a public convention for Omnic rights. It was a foreign, awkward sensation to be called D.Va again, to have cameras flashing in her face, to have people know her but not *know* her. Mentally, she patted herself on the back for agreeing to numb herself to the world, because now she didn't have to deal with anxiety or frustration or, god forbid, *stress*.

The convention went well. She, Lúcio, and Zenyatta delivered their message, and did it with a flourish. Even if she didn't so much believe in Omnic rights, she would fight for them. The grudge she held against Omnics wasn't their fault, so she would fight for them, because they deserved, more than anyone else, a world where they could live without fear.

In Manhattan, she, Pharah, and Genji uprooted and chased out criminal network before it had the

chance to take flight. The mission itself was relatively easy, considering the inexperience of the gang members themselves, and Hana used the time to run a brief Q&A for her fans.

The questions were innocent. Her fans, claiming each to be her No.1, knew nothing, and only brushed the surface of what they knew of her when they fired off their inquiries. It would be comical, if she could convince herself to care enough.

smashdog: its december now. got any plans for christmas? ;))))

"Well," she said, two bullets bouncing off of her defense matrix. "No. I never really celebrated Christmas as a kid." (She never really celebrated anything, but that wasn't important.) "I don't understand the point or traditions and all that crap. *Shi-bal*." A bullet bit into her numb arm. It felt like someone was pinching her skin really hard over the area of impact. "But yeah. Next question?"

HolographicSun: It's so great that you're taking a political stand for Omnic rights! As an Omnic myself, I'm honored to have your support. However, I must ask— what is your overall opinion on the movement? Do you think we're making progress?

Her MEKA jetted forward, one of the mech's arms whipping out to smack one of the criminals in the face, bone and skin crunching beneath her carbon-fiber fist. "Oh, the movement's making progress, all right," she replied, unable to keep the dryness from her voice. "I just have no idea if it's for better or for worse. Next question?"

Arch3324: hey, you doin ok? idk you've just seemed a little down recently :/

Ok? 'Ok?' My best friend was shot and is now in a coma and I'm about one flashback away from falling apart completely how on fucking earth am I supposed to be 'ok'—

"Yup," she said, her tone falling flat on her tongue. "Doin' great. Next question?"

Surviving was easy. But living, especially under the circumstances she'd found herself in, was hard. It was hard for her to sit in the bed next to Lena as Angela removed the bullet fragments from her arm. It was hard, convincing herself not to look at the Brit's prone form.

"Hana?" Angela asked, finally, breaking the heavy silence that had hung over them for the last half hour. "How are you holding up?"

Hana focused very intently on a small indent in the far wall.

"My best friend is in a coma in the bed next to me. I have to convince myself not to care just to survive. I'm constantly two seconds away from falling apart, and I still have to fight a war," she said, forcing her tone to stay even, her expression ungiven. "I'm not 'holding up,' Ziegs. I'm just holding it together. Not very well, at that." She inhaled slowly, and exhaled with just as much patience. "Please hurry. Sitting here is mentally exhausting."

(In combat and in lack of feeling, she found strength. Yes, it was a broken strength, a strength better left unfounded, a strength drawn from the adrenaline lure of the battlefield and the rush of victory. Even if it was not a pure sort of strength, she would take it, because she was selfish, and she was a survivalist. That was how she had been raised, after all.)

December 9th bore a cold, dry morning in Watchpoint: Gibraltar. Frost hung in the outside air and painted the windows white. Of course, from where Hana was inside, safe within the thermally-heated base's premisses, it was the opposite. She was warm. Though, on the other hand, her insides very much felt like how it looked outside. Cold, dry, and devoid of life. It was her own fault, she knew, and it was mere observances that ran through her head as opposed to the previous week's hesitance. Hana was identifying the facts through what was empirical, and noting what could be considered erratic about her behavior. She walked a razor-sharp tightrope after all. To make it through the days, she had to balance the numbness preventing her from having to deal with pain with some sort of warmth. She would not lose herself again.

So, considering this, peering out the expansive window in Gibraltar's central building sundered into the mountainside, she decided that the numbness was spreading too far. She needed to rile herself up somehow. The easiest way to do that was through adrenaline, and the easiest way to trigger adrenaline was by shooting a gun.

The shooting range it is, she thought, moving away from the window with a soft sigh, her breath clouding against the fiberglass.

Watchpoint: Gibraltar had fallen into some sort of vigil ever since the mission failure at St. Petersburg. People came and went, breezing through missions and returning with sunken eyes and ice in their hair. Lena was the heart and soul of Overwatch, and with her still unresponsive, everyone had gone eerily sober. There wasn't much chatter around the base, and everyone had adjusted to their own schedule rather than one united. Widowmaker was still held in the brig, but Hana found herself visiting the sniper more and more frequently. Less to talk, and more to prove a point. Every time she snuck down the stairwell, she brought a cup of water, a food item of some sort, and her light pistol. A confirmation that if Lena died, the Frenchwoman would be next to go.

Satya hadn't been around much, caught up with Winston in the lab, trying to create a more resilient chronal accelerator for Lena when (if) she woke up. Angela was constantly in the medical bay. Everyone else, she'd lost track of entirely.

Hana pushed open the door to the shooting range, and quirked a brow when she realized that she was not alone. Standing there, wielding a training pistol and dressed in nothing but a light hoodie and a pair of shorts, was Mei-Ling Zhou.

Just what I need, she thought, exasperated. *Let's just hope she doesn't try to make conversation.*

Mei turned to her as she stepped into the large room, eyes widening in surprise. "Hana!" she exclaimed, befuddlement crossing her face. "What a surprise, seeing you here."

"Likewise," Hana replied slowly, grabbing a pistol of her own and flicking off the safety. "Mind if I join you?"

"O-of course not!" As if to prove her point, Mei shuffled over a tad and called in a new round of practice drones.

Hana stepped over and leveled her gun at one of the drones, her feet sliding into position naturally, one eye squinting shut. It was odd, how natural the gun felt in her hands, now. Hadn't she said, at some point, that her hands were far better fit for a gaming controller? Why, then, did the grip of the gun feel like she'd been born to open fire? It was odd— an abnormality. She made a note to

deal with it later.

Bang. The head of the drone exploded in a cloud of metal and wire. If it had been a human standing there, would their head have exploded in a similar manner?

Bang. The bullet crashed into the droid's chest. Like Lena. The blood would have juttied up the torso just so.

Bang. Oh. *Oh.* She needed to stop now. An episode was coming on. She needed to go. Rather than finding an excuse, it seemed an excuse had found her, instead.

Bang. She really needed to stop. The world was shifting around her. The streets were familiar, the empty space around her morphing into a thick crowd. She knew where she was going. Oh, how vividly she remembered this scene.

Bang. She wasn't in Seoul. That was in the past. This had taken place years ago.

Bang. It was in the past.

Bang. It *had* to be in the past.

Bang. The protestor had been a right mess to clean up. She'd watched the report on her hotel's television the day after. They said it was a shot full of intention— the work of a professional. She hadn't wanted to kill him. It wasn't her fault. She had no choice. In the army, you follow orders, or you die. That was what she learned.

Bang. That was the first time she killed someone. The first time her perfectly filed fingernails got blood beneath them, the first time she realized the smell of iron on her hands would never fade.

Bang. He must have been no older than thirty. The police said his Omnic wife and adopted son were devastated. They seeked justice for the killer.

Bang. God, he'd had a *family*. She'd killed three people that day with one bullet. Back then, she hadn't understood that pain. That was before she lost Kim. That was before she burst through the doors of her broken house and watched the bodies of her parents crumble into ash.

Bang. She was a *murderer*. There was never a justifiable reason for killing, and yet she treated it as if it were effortless, as if it were moral, as if... as if it didn't kill her, too.

Click. Click.

Hana blinked herself out of her unfocused reverie and glanced down. She'd run out of bullets. Rather than refill the clip, as she knew she ought to, she just stared.

"Hana?" Mei called from beside her. "Hana, what's—"

"Does it ever get better?" Hana asked, hating the way her voice cracked, but ultimately too tired to care.

"...eh?" Mei whispered, confusion thick in her accented tone. "What do you mean?"

Hana shrugged, fiddling with the gun inattentively. "It's just..." she trailed off and turned her head away from the other woman with a grimace. "I've been trying. I've tried everything— nothing works. And it's— it's really degrading, y'know? When you... When you *want* to get better but you *can't* because there's *nothing* you can do. A-and at the end of the day you're just as broken as you were that morning." She ran a hand through her bangs frantically, her tongue passing over her

lips.

"I just— I'm tired of doing this. Restarting. Every time I think I'm moving on, I'm just moving ten steps back. I'm exhausted. It's draining. I can't trust anything anymore because there's always this nagging doubt that, 'oh, this thing is going to betray me, too.' I can't even trust myself." She chuckled, a hoarse, grating sound that dragged itself out of her larynx. "I guess... I guess what I'm trying to say is that I don't want to keep going like this if it never eases up. I need to know that there's a better life waiting for me if I keep tearing myself apart. That's all that's kept me going this far, ever since Lena—" it was there that she choked, a tremor racking her body and causing the pistol to clatter to the floor.

"I don't know what to do with myself," she mumbled, hugging her midsection. "I've tried everything. I can't trust myself to heal properly. I can't trust myself not to fuck this up again."

"It gets better."

Hana blinked. "Huh?"

"It gets better," Mei repeated, abandoning her gun and pressing forward bravely, her expression determined. "Trust me. No matter how much it hurts, it will get better."

"But how do you *know*?" Hana keened, glancing up desperately. "What am I missing? What am I doing wrong?"

"You did nothing wrong," Mei said, "But the world isn't out to attack you, either. You say you can't trust anything because you think it will betray you? That's hardly an argument."

"What would you know?" Hana spat. "You don't understand. I've lost *everything*."

"I *do* understand!" Mei roared, grabbing Hana's shoulders roughly. "We all understand how you feel!"

Hana reeled in surprise. She'd never seen the scientist this angry before.

Mei pressed on.

"Have you read through the files on Ecopoint: Antarctica yet?"

"Well, no, but—"

"January 4th, 09:32 AM. The thermal generator breaks down in the research building. Then, the entire base loses power. My squad and I evacuate to the cryo-chambers to escape the flooding hallways. The last thing I remember is the face of my commander in the small, ice-covered window of my chamber. When I wake up, my teammates are all dead and frozen and I'm the only one left." Mei inhaled sharply, her grip on Hana's shoulders slackening. "For the longest time, I was convinced it was over. I'd convinced myself that I deserved to die alongside them."

She laughed. It wasn't anything like her typical, mirthful giggle. It was worn and abused, rattling against Hana's ears.

"But you know what? It got better. I sought help. I met my girlfriend, and she helped me push past it. It took years. I'm still not entirely over it, and it's okay. I know now that I'll never get over it completely, but I'm not letting it stop me from getting more than *two goddamn hours of sleep every three days, Hana*." Mei shook her head and her grip tightened once more.

"Your friend got shot— it's not the end of the world. You need to let it go. You need to trust that

Lena will get better— Lena's been through worse. She'll be bouncing back before you know it."

"But—"

"You are stronger than this, Hana. The reason you became an idol for people across the globe wasn't because of D.Va, it was because of *you*. You, the strong, independent woman who has sacrificed so much for this world, even when it's given you nothing back. You took down the colossal Omnic. You survived losing more than 40% of your body's blood. You are the world's backbone, and you have not broken. You can do this. I believe in you. We *all* do."

Hana was stunned. She... she didn't know what to think. Nobody had ever held her accountable like this, or stated that they believed in her so valiantly.

She wasn't strong. She couldn't be; and she was broken. Being anything less was unfathomable. How could she be strong? What had she done to make them believe so? Had she unconsciously deceived them, too? She must have. That was the only explanation.

"You can do this, Hana," Mei murmured, relenting her hold and taking a step back. "But you don't have to do it alone."

Hana clenched her fists, eyes down turning to the floor. "Mei, I..."

The door to the shooting range slammed open, startling both Hana and Mei and causing their heads to swivel to the source.

Fareeha stood there, panting.

"Hana," she said, breathless. "Lena's awake."

Chapter End Notes

Okay so explanation time.

I included the whole emotion-disconnect scene because I really think that's the only way Satya realistically would have been able to cope with the shit she did for Vishkar AND she hasn't been put in a situation where she wants to help someone emotionally, so suggesting Hana cut the fuse was her instinctive response because that's all she knew how to do, however potentially harmful.

I also wanted to include that because I want to show that the members of Overwatch may be 'heroes' but they're also human and they make mistakes and fall in love and bleed like the rest of us.

Aaaalso, I've been debating making a parallel story to this except it's from Mercy's perspective so thoughts on that would be great.

Have a great week guys.

- Ace.

uphill battles

Chapter Notes

sorry about the late update. i got sick again. thanks, crummy immune system.

also the votes are in - i'll be starting the mercy spinoff as soon as i finish TYNS.

thanks for being so supportive guys.

this chapter is for kenju, who has made me cry twice. fucking thanks, you smooth-ass, brown-nosing little shit.

CW: excessive swearing (ha), gore, the likes

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Hana didn't know how to breathe. She didn't know which way was up and which way was down. She didn't know if the ground was still beneath her feet, or if she was falling. She didn't know the world was still spinning or if it had stopped to give her a moment to reel. There was little she knew, her mind blank and expression ghastly pale with shock. Her ears rang painfully, the sound pounding in her head like an alarm.

"Huh?" she breathed, unable to hear her own voice. "Could you repeat that?"

Fareeha spoke again, her smiling lips moving without sound, and though she couldn't hear her, Hana *understood*. The shock she felt sparked immediately into fear, and then that fear exploded into exhilaration.

"Holy *shit*."

Hana had never run so fast in her life. She darted past Fareeha, sprinting down the hallways so fast until everything around her was a blur. Someone called her name, and her socks skidded on the slick floor as she dodged around an unsuspecting Genji, who yelped and jumped back upon witnessing her furious dash.

She couldn't believe it. Lena was awake. How long had it been since she last saw the Brit's warm amber eyes? Would her face still be skeletal, or round and full of life like it used to be? Questions and worries nagged at her but she quieted them easily.

She stumbled around a tight corner, her shoulder crashing into the wall with a dull thud, but she didn't care. How could she? After all, Lena was... Lena was—

Hana burst into the medical bay, breathing hard, her jacket loose around her shoulders.

"Cheers," Lena croaked, offering a halfhearted wave.

"Dumbass," Hana sobbed, a smile tugging at her lips. "What took you so long?"

Lena grinned and opened up her arms invitingly. "I could ask you the same."

Lena wasn't as she usually was, but Hana was pleased to find that she didn't look half-dead anymore. The Brit's face was gaunt, dark bags hanging under her eyes, with remnants of a bruise scattered across the bridge of her nose. She looked thinner, and paler, but her eyes were bright and awake.

"Please don't," Hana laughed, sinking into the embrace and pressing her grin into the side of Lena's neck. "Not everyone can travel 400 feet in .3 seconds."

Lena laughed again, weak, but fighting for life. "True that."

Hana pulled back a bit, her eyes scanning the bruise on the Brit's face. "How do you feel?"

Lena groaned and pitched forward, falling into Hana's shoulder. "I feel like I've been mauled by a bloody bulldozer."

"You might as well have been, with what that bullet did to your torso."

Both Hana and Lena jumped and whipped around to see Angela walking into the room, dressed in a white lab coat and bearing a clipboard and a pair of reading glasses across the bridge of her nose.

Hana pulled back from Lena, feeling suddenly exposed beneath the weight of Angela's heavy blue eyes. How long had it been since she'd last seen the doctor, or heard from her, or had looked her in the eye? They trusted each other, months ago. Where had that trust gone? She didn't know where they stood next to each other. Angela had fought hand and foot to stand by Hana's side. But in the weeks that had passed since St. Petersburg... they'd hardly seen each other. All Hana could remember was once or twice. Once, when the doctor extracted the bullet fragments from her arm after Manhattan. The second time, as they passed each other in the hallway at some point, not acknowledging the other at all.

"Lena," Angela said, her face stony, posture stoic. "I told you not to accept visitors. You have a physical exam in three days. You've barely woken, and are hardly healed enough to be moving around."

Lena winced. "Sorry, doc."

Hana felt threatened. Something had happened to Angela, and she didn't know what, but it was scaring her. She remembered Iceland. She remembered the doctor's fierce compassion and faith in her, the faith that Hana would heal. That fire, that felicity, it was gone. Who was Angela, now?

The doctor leveled her gaze on her. She flinched instinctively.

"Hana," Angela said, turning on her heel back towards her office, "come with me."

She was speaking before she could think, because this was horrifically similar to something else, and she needed to *protect herself*.

"Why?" She blurted, and she knew instantly that it was a mistake. She didn't just defy her parents and get away with it. That wasn't how her household worked.

"You," her mother said, coolly, voice soft and deadly like a cold, cold poison. "Will come with me. Now."

"What are you going to do?" Her younger self squeaked, indignant, but afraid.

"You will obey your mother."

"But I—"

"Child."

The words died in her mouth, tasting like ash. "Yes, ma'am."

She was confused. Terrified, even. She couldn't remember doing anything wrong. What had she messed up? Would it be like last time, where her mother had reared up like a snake about to strike, claws extended like those of a vulture—

"Hana. Come back to me."

She blinked, the world spinning back into focus, but she adamantly refused to look up from her feet. Her fists clenched into her shirt.

"What?"

She heard Angela exhale sharply. "*Please.*"

Hana ambled into the office reluctantly, eyes darting around, searching for threats. Angela paced to the far side of the room and rubbed her worried brow with one hand. For a moment, they stood in silence, but Hana's fear eventually got the better of her.

"What the fuck do you want?" she bit out, taking on a facade of anger to ward off the unpleasant feel of the small, clandestine room.

The doctor rounded on her, eyes blazing.

"Hana," she said, her voice quiet and clipped. "Look at me."

Hana didn't know whether it was a hoax or if she was being genuine. What was that cold atmosphere back in the medical bay for, then?

She was scared. She was scared to look up and find an image of her mother standing there, all shadows and poison and knife blades in the reflection of a broken mirror, her eyes black like obsidian, her tongue split like a snake.

(You're Hana "D.Va" fucking Song, she cursed, dredging together some semblance of a resolve. You're not scared of them anymore. They died, and you said you were over them. Don't go back on your own word.)

Hana glared upwards, squaring her jaw to spit fire if need be, and she faltered.

Angela's face was tired and dark. She looked old and worn and weary. However, most prevalent of all, there was a touch of fear in her eyes, and *there* was that compassion Hana had once thought was absent in the doctor.

"*Liebling,*" Angela said. "I'm still on your side, but I have defenses, too. Seeing my teammates, my *family*, so close to death... it pains me. It pains me because, as their doctor, I have the power to let them live or let them die. There's a burden on my shoulders, the burden of a hundred thousand lives. I have my own ways to cope with that. But know that I'm still with you, all right?"

It was easy to forget that she wasn't the only one that suffered the weight of the world. She was a selfish person, a self-centered attention-seeker who hated company but was scared of being left alone, who had a tendency to stitch herself together just to tear herself apart, and then claim the

world was to blame.

It was hard to train herself not to seek the light as she forced herself deeper into darkness. In absence of light, she was starting to realize just how many shadows haunted her, how many skeletons and ghosts lingered in the windows of her eyes, and she was learning to seek the pain of others rather than their pleasure.

It was hard, because the guilt was a chain tying her to her carnivorous past, and the bitterness would not so easily be discarded.

"Yeah," she said shortly, though her tightly coiled muscles did not relax. "Right. I've heard that one before."

That was what Kim had said before electricity sparked in the air and she fell to her untimely demise. Everything was a reminder of something she'd seen, and for a moment, a twinge of regret flitted through her mind, and made her doubt her choice to become a soldier. Had she known that *this*, this bloody, inescapable cycle was the price to pay for glory, she never would have set foot on that first battlefield.

Hana sighed and scuffed the ground with her foot. "Sorry. That was uncalled for. You're trying to help, and I'm being a dick."

Angela's outstretched hand retracted. Rather, the doctor took a step forward, her posture shifting instantly from vulnerable and amiable to concerned. "Another memory?"

Hana nodded. "Kim."

Angela shook her head. "Before then. You froze in the medical bay, too."

Hana but her tongue and let her gaze smolder against the polished cement beneath her feet.

"In the medical bay..." She started, hesitating before convincing herself that this was something she needed to do. "Back there, you reminded me of my neglectful, good-for-nothing mom." She forced a bitter laugh, tasting salt when she went to wet her lips. "Which is actually really funny, because she's dead, now, and I thought that stomping on her grave and revoking their right to be my parents would remove them from my life, but it hasn't. Not any less. I still see my dad in my sleep; I still hear my mom in your voice."

Hana shrugged, her nails digging into the palms of her hands. "Anyways, my mom used to call me to her office whenever she was disappointed in me. You know this, but back then, I could do whatever I wanted, so when I got in trouble, it was *bad*." She swallowed hard, and tried to keep her voice from shaking as she continued.

"My mom was only ever disappointed when I tried to defy her. She would... She would take me into her office and tear me apart by the seams. She made me believe that I was an absolute failure of a child."

Anger surged within her, and she scoffed, throat burning. "And then she had the *gall* to claim to be on *my* side, to claim that it was for *my* own good. I may have been young, but I wasn't *stupid*." She exhaled through her teeth and rubbed at her temples. "*Fuck* this, I didn't force myself to break just to have old demons bite my ankles again. I hope you're fucking happy."

Angela opened her arms. "I apologize," the doctor said quietly. "I'm sorry. I scared you, and that was wrong of me. Let me make it up to you."

Hana eyed her warily for a moment, doubtful, afraid of yet again being betrayed.

(*The world isn't out to attack you*, Mei had said. Maybe it was time to try believing that.)

"It's okay," she said, stepping into Angela's arms, like she had with Lena, and with Satya, and with Fareeha before then. "We all make mistakes. But we heal."

Angela hummed. "You should try listening to your own advice."

"The reason people *give* advice is so they don't have to take it, Ziegs."

"That may be true, but the wisest things can sometimes come from one's own mouth."

Hana huffed and rolled her eyes. "Whatever helps you sleep at night." She shrugged off Angela's embrace and shoved her hands into her pockets.

The two women were quiet for a moment, before Hana broke it again, a thought striking her.

"Hey, Ziegs?" she called softly. The doctor in question glanced up at her and quirked a brow. "We'll be okay, right?"

Angela smiled, blue eyes glinting kindly. "Yes. We'll be okay."

Two days passed. It was December 11th. Most of Hana's time had been devoted to helping Lena move around Gibraltar and adjust to her new chronal accelerator, courtesy of the conjoined efforts of Satya and Winston. The new device was sleeker, waterproof, and made of an extremely durable alloy whose composites Hana had already forgotten.

Lena's wound was healing very well, as opposed to Hana's wounds after Kashgar. The skin was knitting itself together under the influence of nanotechnology day by day, and with every minute that passed, the rosier and livelier Lena became.

Satya had already come forward and apologized to Hana, saying that she was wrong to try to tell her that strength came from lack of emotion. Hana quickly discarded the apology, more relieved than anything to have both of her friends back with her.

Satya, herself, wasn't around much, busy with who knows what, but sometimes Hana and Lena would hobble to the kitchen and there would be two steaming mugs waiting for them.

Snow had begun to fall regularly around the base. The only people unbothered by it were Bastion, Mei, and Aleksandra. Everyone else had resigned themselves to a life within the warm walls of Gibraltar, where they didn't have to deal with potential frostbite.

Missions came and went. Hana partook in none of them. Ever since Manhattan, she had not been assigned a single mission. She got the feeling she knew why, but for the time being, time given was time appreciated. Lena was still adjusting to her injury, after all. Hana would not abandon her, not even if she was sent off on a mission.

She still visited Widowmaker, though she'd taken to bringing full meals down to the sniper after a brief and succinct argument with Winston. The sniper had yet to give information up to anyone, though it was *painfully* clear that she had a preference in interrogators. Especially when Hana brought down an elegant dish of Satya's creation, and watched as those deoxygenated golden eyes

perked up considerably at the sight.

Hana knew Widowmaker on the outside, and knew enough to say that kindness would not buy her access to the former Talon operative's excessive information. If there was any way into the sniper's heart, then it would be through bribery and good food.

Jack didn't understand it when she tried to explain the situation to him, not that she could blame him—he was an old, by-the-books man; a man who didn't know how to get what he wanted any other way than by force. He didn't know that people softened like butter when offered the simplest of pleasures in life. He didn't know that entertainment was the supreme power, not weapons, not soldiers. She didn't expect him to understand when she said as much.

After all, before D.Va's creation, she hadn't understood much, either. Back then, all she had understood that defiance led to pain, and that the world was full of prying eyes and clawed hands and dark corners for the devil to lie in wait.

And now, well, the corners she saw were less defined by shadows and more defined by dust because nobody cared enough to consistently keep Gibraltar clean other than Hanzo, and he was only one man in a very, very large base.

Nonetheless, the change in atmosphere was welcome. Her sessions with Zenyatta were now helping her learn to overcome past incidents of emotional trauma, and work with the overwhelming guilt and feelings of unworthiness. It was an odd sensation, knowing how she felt and why she felt it, but ultimately feeling that way, regardless of how desperately she tried to persuade herself otherwise. Her anxiety was a nail driven deep into her side, and removing it completely would be a long, tentative process. That much, she knew.

However, the time it would take her scars to heal was minuscule in comparison to Satya.

Hana had confronted Satya about her emotional dissociation shortly after Lena's awakening. Satya, surprisingly, had denied this until Hana prodded further and something in the architech snapped. (She didn't want to see Satya angry ever again.) It had been a tearful argument, resulting in much yelling from both parties and the raising of fists before they both broke down crying in each other's arms. They were conscious enough to know that *nothing* was worth losing their friendship over, but just tired and stressed enough to discard previous rules and walls preventing unprecedented physical contact.

That conversation had hurt, but it was a good hurt—a hurt for the better. Satya had agreed to come with her on days where she had sessions with Zenyatta and, true to her dog-like nature, Lena would always tag along.

And today, December 11th, was one of those days. Normally, their lessons took place outside, but it was far too cold for that, so they were merely granted private use of the common room.

"Zen!" she called out upon entering, and the Omnic turned slowly to face them from where he hovered.

"Hello, Hana, Satya, and Lena," the Omnic whirred cheerfully, gesturing to the mats to his side. "Come, sit."

Hana helped Lena ease down before taking a seat of her own, and Satya paused as if debating whether or not to make a stool of her own before reluctantly settling down on the final pillow.

"Today," Zenyatta started, hovering low to the ground, his orbs floating around him peacefully,

"we are going again on a search for sources of fear, pain, and guilt, as we discovered were the three primary stresses preventing you from healing. So, I ask you, close your eyes and think—what, in the past, has caused you to feel most intensely and most negatively?"

Hana closed her eyes, used to the brisk yet lenient pace of these lessons.

Pain, she thought, her brown knitting. *Fear. Guilt.*

Before she could rationally pick her thoughts apart, the world was spinning, and she was somewhere else entirely. The moment she realized where, her body seized up, terror tying a tight noose around her neck.

The memory began almost like a movie. She was strapped to her theater seat, alone, watching the events play out before her as if she was there all over again.

And she wished she were anywhere else.

Chapter End Notes

guess who fails to get enough sleep every night writing this for y'all instead lmao

this story is my life im so invested in it

next update should come sooner so i can get back on schedule

also the END IS IN SIGHT, FINALLY

have a good thanksgiving guys

- Ace.

schadenfreude

Chapter Notes

this is just angsty dreams guys... it's not fun. TW, CW, yada yada. you get it.

hana's life was shit and you will not convince me anything else ever okay

also debating whether or not to go shippy d.va/symmetra or keep them friends :/
because i'm right at that point where it could comfortably go either way

the struggle is real

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The problem with the Colossal Omnic was that not only did it wreck havoc on South Korea, but it was also a symbol of rebellion for Omnics all across Asia. MEKA, though their original purpose was to combat and eventually take down the ever-adapting titan of the ocean, were also tasked with managing the rioting Omnics and neutralizing those who would actively try to sabotage the government.

There weren't many active riots. After the first one, the one Hana knew to be the most brutal, there were only two more, and they were much, much smaller. But that first one— that first one was branded into her memory. She could envision it vividly, the burning streets of Seoul, man and machine clashing on bloodied asphalt. And, in the heart of it all, MEKA, trying and failing to maintain order within the chaos.

"Gyeong," Hana barked out sharply, wrestling an Omnic with a larger build back behind the police tape. "Any word from Bora yet?"

"Christ, D.Va," Gyeong swore on the other end, and the sound of metal scraping against metal echoed through the comm. "Why the fuck would Bora contact me before you?"

"Don't think I haven't seen you two," she tutted gruffly, pushing back the Omnic with a heave and a grunt, before immediately turning to face back another. "Bora looks good in your shirts."

"Fuck off."

"Loser."

Something exploded nearby, making the ground quake violently. Hana's mech stumbled, but she managed to lug the Omnic in the jaw before steadying herself with her thrusters.

"Testing, testing," a voice chirped over the comm.

"Bora!" Hana jeered and grinned wolfishly, taking a pause to wipe blood from her nose. "Glad you could finally join us— though I'm honestly surprised you contacted me, first." Gyeong's muttering of 'oh, fuck you' only sharpened her smile.

Bora sputtered. "Eh? Why is that— oh, never mind that. Saeyoung's here, too."

A low, suave voice clicked online as two mechs entered Hana's peripheral vision. One was a

deep, sleek red. The other was painted blue with white flames.

"Sup."

The two other MEKA units quickly joined Hana and Gyeong in holding the line of oppressive Omnics. Glass shattered against Hana's windshield, and the brief thought of *oh, that's a Molotov* crossed her mind before liquid fire burst across her vision, heat crawling inside her mech. When it dispersed, two Omnics rushed her again and, still somewhat aflame, she charged back.

The silence between her and her teammates didn't last long. Saeyoung was the one to break it.

"So, D.Va, how's life as a superstar?"

Focus. Don't think of them. They can't hurt you here.

"You'd think it'd be more interesting," she replied, her tone carefully even.

"Aww, come on!" Gyeong whined, grunting as an Omnic flung itself at him. He wrestled it off with a swipe of his mech's arm and continued. "Go more in depth! What's it like living in a big, fancy house? Do you have a butler? Fancy food? We middle-class scrubs are desperate for knowledge, here!"

I don't live in a big, fancy house, she thought, pain searing through her head. I don't have a butler. I don't eat fancy food. My parents would kill me if I did.

"It's really not that interesting, guys." She twirled to smack another Omnic into the coarse dirt below. "Is this everyone?"

Bora laughed. "Unfortunately. Everyone else is split up between Shanghai and Kaohsiung."

Hana gnashed her teeth, giving the advancing crowd a peek. There had to be more than a thousand Omnics gathered. The South Korean military couldn't have spared her two more units, at least?

Her comm sparked, a telltale sign of someone new joining. Hana tuned in.

"Squad 3, this is General Park."

Hana winced. General Park was her MEKA unit's overseer, and was infamous for her ruthlessness with recruits and her inability to show mercy on the battlefield.

"Hey, General Park," she greeted nonetheless, unable to keep her voice from sounding slightly guilty. "Fancy, seeing you here."

Park was unimpressed.

"Heh, sorry, boss. What're the new orders from HQ?"

Park paused. Hana's heart sank like a stone. *Please, don't tell me—*

"You are now authorized to use violence to tame the Omnic insurgents."

Hana froze, her blood immediately going cold, her shit-eating grin having been smacked off of her face. Her hands hesitated on the triggers of her fusion cannons, and she shared hesitant glances with the other three pilots privy to the news. They looked equally unsure of what to do. Bora looked downright terrified.

"Are you sure, sir? I really don't think that's—"

"*Child*," General Park growled, knowing full well how the title affected her, "*that's an order*."

Hana bit her tongue and steeled her gaze. *Disassociate*, D.Va warned. *This isn't going to be pretty. I'll handle things from here on out.*

"Yes, sir," Hana (D.Va) droned, switching her optics to tactical and readjusting her grip.

"D.Va, what the fuck?!" Gyeong exclaimed, his expression twisted with odious disbelief.

"We have our orders," she bit out. "Do what you're told." She disconnected her comm just as Saeyoung and Bora began to screech in protest. If they got discharged, then she was not to blame. It wouldn't be her fault if they got put on cleaning duty for four weeks. It wouldn't be her punishment to share. After all, she was a good soldier; she got the job done. She followed orders, as much as she hated it, because she didn't know how to do anything else.

Her mech stormed forward slowly, each step further into the crowd a condemnation of another life. Absentmindedly, she wondered how many she would have to kill for the message to get across, or if she'd be told to be rid of them all, and have to watch as they ran into her line of fire like pigs to a slaughter.

General Park crackled back online. She waited for the signal.

"D.Va, open fire."

Her arms felt like earthquakes. The bodies piled beneath her feet, and creaked and groaned as she advanced.

Gyeong, Saeyoung, and Bora did not join her. She couldn't convince herself to care. And her ears were ringing, her nose burning, her eyes dry from the heat of Seoul aflame.

But her heart? Her heart was as empty as it was broken, and as the bodies piled by the hundreds, she never faltered. She hardly blinked, hardly breathed. She knew that killing was supposed to fill oneself with adrenaline, but she hardly even felt alive.

During extraction, she said nothing.

Twenty-seven minutes. 362 solo kills.

Gyeong, Saeyoung, and Bora received harsh reprimands and cleaning duty for three weeks. She received commendations and awards she could not care to remember, and more nightmares than her weary mind could bear. For two hours, she lingered in her bathroom, choking on the smell of hot steel and smoke and trying, in vain, to rinse the black stains from her trembling hands. Guilt threatened to strangle her, but she refused to drown.

Shanghai was a disaster, from what she heard in debrief. Of the eight MEKA units sent, only seven returned. Apparently, Ja-Kyung was overwhelmed by 'violent Omnic insurgents' and beaten to death. The other pilots quickly chipped at the riled crowd and retreated early in a frenzied panic.

Apparently, Kaohsiung went much better; Taeyoon lead Squad 2 and was successfully able to tame the crowd with little to no violence. A clear sign of what she was capable of as commander.

If she couldn't solve anything any other way than through violence, then what could she possibly accomplish against the Colossal Omnic?

General Park claimed to be proud of her for following orders so diligently. Hana knew better, but like a drug, she took the praise in kind and injected it. For a minute, she was high on approval, and the crushing ache in her chest faded. Then, of course, reality hit again, and she was right back where she was: retching in her toilet, her hands blackened and nose bleeding and ears ringing, ringing, ringing.

The noise faded. Her vision went dark. The memory was warping.

"D.Va, you have ten minutes until go time."

Hana exhaled shakily, a tremor shaking her hands as she dabbed her cheeks with stripes of hot pink paint.

"Y-yeah," she managed to stutter beyond the hard lump in her throat. "Just... just give me a minute."

The older cameraman gave her a dubious once-over before shrugging and exiting the prep room.

It was amazing, all that had led her to where she was. Five months ago, she'd been nobody. And now—now she was world famous. Now, she was waiting the last few minutes before she had to go out on stage and fight like her life depended on it. It was the pinnacle of her whole gaming career until then— if she won, she would become a superstar, like she'd always wanted. If she lost...

She didn't really want to think of the repercussions of losing.

"I can do this," she muttered, glaring at her reflection in the mirror. "I *will* do this. I have to." It was difficult, repeating those words to a reflection she hardly recognized. They'd put so much make-up on her face, she almost looked plastic. Nothing like the grimy, sallow-eyed, manic-depressed kid they'd been drawn to all those long months ago.

Technically, she wasn't even supposed to be here. She had snuck out of the house against her parent's will. It was a lucky thing that this competition was happening so late at night. Hana knew that when she returned, her parents would be livid, but she did not want to think about that, either. All she needed to think about was the long competition she had ahead.

"I can do this. I can do this. I can't back out now. I've come too far."

The longer she stared at that alien reflection, the less she believed those words.

"I can do this. I can do this. I can—"

Her voice caught on a dry, violent sob that made her body heave. A ferocious burn swept through her chest, and she bit down hard on her hand to prevent tears from shedding. That would be a complete waste of good makeup.

Oh, but she *was* terrified. She was so violently scared, she felt like puking. She felt like *dying*. She felt like running away. Keeping the heavy tears contained in her wet eyes was a terrible strain. It felt like she was falling apart.

(And then, suddenly, she was *feeling*, and it was all too much.)

The world was too much for her. The quiet din of the filming crew beyond the doors morphed into a deafening roar. The dim lights of the prep room suddenly seared into her skull with their newfound intensity. Her heart was pounding like a jackhammer, and every breath she took was choked out of her lungs before she could really breathe.

"Calm down," she mumbled. "Calm down. This is pathetic. Calm down. What would Mom think? You're D.Va. D.Va's not a crybaby. Come on, Hana, suck it up. This is your life now."

The shaking did not stop, nor did the sudden and overwhelming nature of the world, but her eyes dried, her posture straightened, and she added the last dashes of pink to her face. Ready or not, this was it.

A new cameraman entered. His beanie was pulled low over his head. "D.Va, you're up."

She blew her bangs out of her face with a puff of air, glancing again at her unfamiliar, dolled-up face; her dark, lightless eyes; her signature pink letterman jacket emblazoned with her newfound motif and all of her sponsors.

"Game on," she breathed, peeling away from the mirror and exiting the prep room. "Let's get this over with."

The stage was enormous. The runway to the center was long and narrow and a brilliant shade of blue. Her and her opponent walked side by side. She was going against a man who looked to have a good few years on her. He wore a white t-shirt decorated with names and brands and, above all, his gamertag— 1trillion. She'd seen him play before. He was good, and he was very well-known. His alternate name was 'newbie-crusher.'

1trillion never advanced beyond preliminary competitions. After his first win years back, he'd chosen to compete yearly in the first rounds to chase away the rookies. Hana knew that, going against him, that she wouldn't need to just beat him— in order to get true recognition, then she would have to utterly humiliate him.

Best to stay with the classics, then, she thought with a jagged smirk, shaking the other gamer's hand to signify the true beginning of the competition. *Nothing beats a good Zerg rush.*

She won by a landslide. 1trillion graciously accepted his defeat. The crowds roared in applause. The noise was deafening.

The high of her victory carried her back to Busan. It carried her to her doorstep and then fled as soon as she opened the door, and then she was just as nervous and paranoid as she was before the tournament. The house was quiet, and as she stepped into its threshold, a chill crawled down her spine. As she slipped her jacket off of her shoulders, a light flicked on, and fear strangled her, paralyzed her on the spot.

"You were out past curfew," her father remarked tonelessly. His cold, steely black glanced over her. "You were out gaming, weren't you, child?"

Hana swallowed hard, her lungs shaking with every breath. "Yes, sir," she fumbled out over a numb tongue. "But I—"

Her father held up a hand for silence. She snapped her mouth shut quickly.

"I'm disappointed," he said. "We told you not to go to that competition, didn't we? And yet, you went, anyways. You can't even follow simple orders. That's pathetic, child. What a waste of time you are."

She felt the sting of tears boil in her eyes and she furiously willed it away. "I'm sorry," she stated quietly, arms folding across her chest in a protective gesture. "It won't happen again."

"See that it doesn't. Your mother is very upset."

Hana lurched, barely tampering the urge to run. "I understand, Dad."

"You understand the consequences, do you not?"

She remembered vividly. She could still feel the ache of phantom welts where her mother's hand had struck like lightning in a thunderstorm. "I understand."

"Hm. Go to bed, child. I don't want to see you until tomorrow night, am I clear?"

She stifled a sob behind a bit lip and shoved it back down her strangled throat. "Crystal."

Her mother dragged her by the ear into her office the next morning. Hana stood with her back against the wall and counted each time her mother's hand made contact with her cheek to distract herself from the pain.

Twelve... Thirteen... Fourteen...

After twenty, she stopped caring.

The scene changed again. One moment she was hollow in spirit, the next, her mind was a frenzied haze of heat. Snow swirled around her in a white-out blizzard. The shadow of a titan looked overhead. Far below her, the ice creaked and groaned. The colossal Omnic shook.

Her comm screamed in her ear. Areum, Hye, Jason, Iseul... She heard them all. Perhaps she screamed alongside them.

Hana's mech shuddered, then slipped, and then she was falling. Time seemed to slow before she hit the ice, before she slammed into it with an ear-piercing *cra-cack*.

The water stormed into her lungs, burning and crushing all that it touched. Her heart stuttered as it gushed into her mouth, ice cold and thick, and then, quietly, the world stilled. A red light flashed. Blood pooled in her broken ears.

Wake up, someone called from the darkness of the deep ocean, becoming clearer and clearer the further down she sank. *You're not safe here. Wake up.*

I'm tired, she thought back. *Let me sleep.*

Hana... Hana... Wake up.

"Too tired," she murmured soundlessly in the crushing darkness. "Too tired."

"Hana!"

Hana opened her eyes with a choked gasp. Sweat was rolling down her face and her breathing was heavily labored. She was shaking with perspiration, her shirt sticking to her skin from the exertion of dreaming.

"Ah, you have returned."

She turned sharply to see Zenyatta still sitting there serenely, the slanted grooves of his eyes peering down at her from his perch. "That is good. You seemed to be in a great deal of pain."

"I didn't ask to be," she croaked, surprised at how hoarse her voice sounded. "I was just following *your* instructions."

Zenyatta hummed. "Is that how you see it? I am merely a guide. I am not telling you to do anything. I am simply trying to find what is raw and aching and soothe it."

"...Sure," Hana deadpanned, resisting the urge to roll her eyes.

Zenyatta turned his head away from her, facing Satya, instead. Hana noticed that Lena was missing— she'd probably found the whole session boring, and decided to entertain herself in other ways.

"On another note," the Omnic chirped, snapping her from her thoughts, "Ms. Vaswani is having a troublesome reaction to this exercise, and I cannot rouse her, which is why I woke you. You are used to these lessons, and she is not, and I'm afraid I may have resuscitated something she was unprepared to handle. As I am not close with Ms. Vaswani, I was hoping you could give me some insight as to what may have caused this reaction."

Alarmed, Hana snapped around to face her friend, and her heart sank at the sight.

Satya's gaze was wide and faraway. Her mouth hung agape as if trying to process something she could not comprehend. She was shaking violently, more violently than Hana had been in her regurgitated memory. The architech's chest rose and fell rapidly, haggard gasps heaving themselves or of her mouth at every exhale. It was no doubt the product of pure, unadulterated terror. Hana knew because she had experienced such fear.

But now that she was on the other end of the stick, now that she was the one who needed to do the comforting, she realized just how little she had been caring for herself all along, how heavily she'd been relying on others to keep herself afloat despite her fiery exterior, because now that she was wiser, she knew herself to be lost. She didn't know how to approach the frozen woman before her. She didn't know what to say or what to do. Was physical contact not allowed when Satya had not consented, but desperately needed it? Should she shove her foot in her mouth and say what Satya needed to hear, or what was honest?

Zenyatta seemed to sense her turmoil, and patted her back gently. "Do what feels right," he said. "Don't be afraid to cross boundaries. This is what you need heal. This is what *she* needs to heal."

Hana swallowed her misgivings and shoved down her pride. "Right." Under her breath, she muttered, "Sorry, Satya. This is for the best."

She shuffled forward until she kneeled before the architech, and reached out a hand. It hovered over Satya's skin, before clumsily patting the other woman's cheek several times with a light *pap, pap, pap*.

"Hey," she said softly. "Wake up. You're not there anymore. That happened in a past. Come on."

Satya didn't respond. She didn't even blink. Hana exhaled in an attempt to steady her nerves, and tried again.

"Satya," she said, louder this time. "Hey, Satya. Come on— come back. It's okay. You're okay." She tried a smile, surprised to find it genuine. "I'm here for you."

Satya blinked once, twice, three times. Her mouth closed, but her jaw was still very tense. Her fists clenched in her lap, her hair falling to mask her face as she slowly hung her head.

"Satya?" Hana called, scared of the silence, but afraid to make a move. Hesitantly, she brushed the architect's hair from her face. "Hey, can you hear me?"

Satya exhaled shakily, closing her eyes. Consternation knit her brow, as if she was trying very hard to keep something contained.

"Yes," she replied quietly, her voice more gravelly than Hana had ever heard it. "I apologize."

Hana let the relief wash over her, her hand slipping from Satya's cheek and falling instead in her lap.

"You're fine," she said, feeling shame begin to nag at the fringes of her sleeves. "These sessions are pretty awful. If anything, I should be the one apologizing. I dragged you into this without giving you much detail."

"No," Satya blurted, eyes snapping open as she fervently grabbed Hana's hands. "Please, don't apologize. You're only trying to help."

Hana forced a laugh. "Yeah, but I made you panic. *Really* fucking helpful."

"On the contrary," said Zenyatta from behind her, and she felt slightly guilty for briefly forgetting his presence, "Satya's state of mind is much more at peace than it was previously. Because she was able to unveil what has been causing her apparent and immense grief, she was able to confront the problem, and lessen its effect."

"Indeed," Satya agreed, nodding. "I dreamt of several missions I partook in during my time with Vishkar— missions that all went terribly awry." She looked away and pursed her lips. "I've... been forced to kill people. I was convinced that it was for the greater good at the time, but now that I've seen the world for what it is, I know better. It's... It will be... difficult for me to overcome my guilt."

Hana snorted. "I know the feeling."

Satya offered a small smile. "Though, you are right. These sessions are emotionally draining. I think that's all I'll be able to manage today."

Hana blinked. "Today?"

Satya cocked her head in question. "I do expect that I will be allowed to attend in the future."

Zenyatta clapped his hands together several times. "That would be wonderful, Ms. Vaswani!" He chirped cheerily. "You are very welcome to find me at any time, should you need anything." He clapped his hands together again, calmer now. "And, you are both right. This session was brief, but I think it sets us on a good path towards next lesson." He dipped his head. "Until next time,

students."

Hana watched him drift out of the room. When the door slit shut behind him, she turned back to Satya and let a lopsided grin crack her face.

"Coffee?"

Satya mirrored the smile.

"Coffee will do fine."

Chapter End Notes

Zenyatta, the true MVP.

can you believe that this story was originally only supposed to be 500 words long
lmao

anyways, IMPORTANT NOTICE: I have a tumblr now and it's @cerealwatch so come find me and shoot me a question or a request or whatever. I'm gonna start crossposting this over there starting next week and that's a huge step for me!

My URL is [here!](#)

- Ace.

gelignite

Chapter Notes

we've set off now let's sail this ship into the fucking sunrise

CW: copious amounts of swearing (thanks, Hana)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The hallways were quiet. Hana's bare feet pattered across the cold metal, and the soft clicks of Satya's following footsteps were close behind as they moved towards the kitchen.

"So," Hana said, wincing at how loud her voice sounded in the silence. "You've seen shit, too, then."

Satya paused. "That is putting it rather harshly," she said after a moment, an uncertain lilt to her voice, "but yes. I have seen, and done, things many would consider... inhumane."

Hana huffed, stretching her arms above her head, her bones popping and cracking as she did so. "You and me, both. And probably many more in Overwatch," she drawled, her arms falling to her sides once more. "For a while, you think you're doing it for the right person, for the right cause, for all the right reasons. And then reality catches up and taps you on the shoulder and says, 'hey, remember that stuff you did? That was really fucked up.' And then you just have to live with the guilt because it's been so long, and you know there's nothing you can do to make up for it."

Satya stared at her for a moment, startled and looking somewhat exposed.

"That's... Surprisingly accurate."

Hana offered her a weary smile. "I've had enough time to figure it out, and I want to help if I can. You've gone through hell for me, and it's about time I repaid my debts."

Satya shook her head. "Please, you are not entitled to do anything for me. I help you because I want to and for no other reason."

Hana grinned, warm blooming in her chest. "I know," she said. "But I want to, too. We've both had our lives fucked from both ends. If I'm going to heal, then so are you. Satya, I'm not going to leave you behind. You're..." She sucked in a breath as the words caught in her throat, fear bubbling to the surface, but she shoved it down. Satya wasn't a friend, no— Satya was far more than that, but she didn't, couldn't, find a word to describe it. (She doubted she ever would, and that was surprisingly okay with her.)

"You're important to me. I'm not doing this because I feel like I have to, but because I *want* to see you grow past the shit Vishkar put you through." A nervous laugh burst from her mouth and she rubbed the back of her neck self-consciously. "This is new to me, so I don't think I can really put it into words. I'm not used to saying how I feel. I'm not used to being honest like this. I'm not— I'm not used to caring so much."

She swallowed hard and averted her gaze to her feet. They'd stopped walking. "But I do. I care. I care a hell of a lot." She shook her head and sighed, chuckling quietly to herself as she glanced

back up at her companion.

"Okay, that's enough cheese for me. I'm done being a sap. I mean— you get what I was trying to say, anyways."

Satya joined in her laughter. "Yes, I think I understand. Expressing myself is a foreign concept, but I am trying. Having your support, your companionship, would mean a lot." She paused, suddenly looking awkward. "Would— is this an appropriate time for a hug? I'm not— I do not know much about physical interactions, so—"

Hana grinned and wrapped her arms around Satya's neck in a tight hug. "Oh, I don't either," she said quietly against the architech's neck. "But I think we can figure it out, yeah?"

Satya's arms hesitantly snaked around Hana's waist. "I... I think so," she breathed. "I'll try my best to get it right."

Hana snorted. "It's not about doing it right, Satya, it's about doing what feels comfortable. Are you comfortable right now?"

Satya sighed, and Hana didn't realize how tense he architech was until her whole body relaxed in her grasp.

"Yes," Satya said. "I am comfortable."

Hana cracked a smile and pulled back to look Satya in the eyes. "Then we're doing *something* right."

Satya opened her mouth, seemed to reconsider whatever she was going to say, and nodded with wet eyes.

"Thank you," she said quietly, stepping back from Hana's embrace and raising a hand to cover her eyes. "T-thank you."

It was like Hana was looking at a carbon copy of her younger self.

"Hey," she said, knowing as well as Angela had when Hana broke down in Iceland that she needed to tread lightly and be gentle. "It's okay. If you need to cry, then do it. Here, I'll close my eyes if that makes you more comfortable, just— please don't bury it again."

Hana closed her eyes and took a step back, though it was difficult, listening to Satya's muffled sobs fill the quiet hallway and knowing that she couldn't, wouldn't, shouldn't, do anything. This was Satya's fight now.

"I'll go start up the coffeemaker," Hana said after a few moments, unable to bear listening to her friend suffer any further. "Come down whenever you feel like it." A thought struck her in a stroke of sheer genius. "Actually..."

She turned her gaze to the ceiling. "Hey, Athena?"

The response was immediate. "Yes, Ms. Song?"

She shook her head. "It's just Hana. Anyways, will you queue up a movie on the downstairs screen for me? I'll let you pick if you want to watch, too. Just make it something distracting."

Athena chuckled overhead and chirruped her assent before moving her presence elsewhere in the base. After a brief glance back at Satya, Hana continued on towards the direction of the

kitchenette.

Satya needed to do this alone, Hana knew. But that didn't make pulling away any less difficult.

One cup, a mocha with a healthy dollop of whipped cream; the other, black with three teaspoons of sugar and a swirl of coconut milk. A movie was queued on the screen in the common room behind her, but she hadn't taken the time to see what Athena had chosen yet.

She was alone, drinking her coffee sip by sip without really tasting it. More than anything, taste reminded her of liquor.

Hana had never been big on alcohol. Though it nulled the jagged edges of her imbrued dreams, she hated the taste of it. (Not as much as she hated the taste of energy drinks, but both were about equivalent with raw piss, so what was the point in differing them?) When the rest of the members drank and partied after a successful mission, she typically wouldn't join them in favor of streaming, or she would sit off to the side and drink alone, in secrecy, where Jack's prying eyes couldn't find her.

There was a distinct difference in drinking alone with alcohol and drinking alone with coffee. With alcohol, it didn't matter who you shared it with, or why, or when, just that the cups kept refilling, one after another. With coffee, it was meant to be shared between people, with purpose, for small conversations at midnight or quiet voices after a mission lost. Coffee was meant for comfort. Alcohol was meant for forgetting.

But between the two of them, both tasted horrible when partaken of alone.

The counter was cold. The mug in her hands felt cold. She didn't know anymore if leaving Satya alone in the hallway had done more harm than good. The empty seat next to her loomed, no matter how hard she tried to ignore the vacancy.

"Ms. Vaswani is approaching," Athena supplied helpfully overhead, voice soft, as if sensing the heavy dent in Hana's mood. "Her mood has improved considerably. What you told her must have worked— her heart rate and breathing are normal."

Hana jolted upright, barely managing to prevent knocking her mug over. Her eyes whipped towards the entryway just as the architech entered.

Satya looked much calmer and more relaxed than she had previously been last Hana saw her. Her typically formal garb had been exchanged for a loose blue shirt and yoga pants. When she saw Hana, she smiled.

"Are you... okay?" Hana asked, hopping off of her seat.

Satya nodded and tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. "Yes," she said. "I needed that— my shoulders feel much lighter now. Thank you."

The answer assuaged Hana significantly. She'd been worrying herself sick about whether or not the decision she made was the right call, so hearing it from Satya's lips was comforting.

"Your coffee's on the counter," Hana said, moving towards the large screen and couch waiting for her. "I'm going to go see what movie Athena picked."

Hana hopped over the back of the couch and fished for the remote. The screen was dark, but as soon as she sat down, it lit up, its flamboyant title bathing her in a fuchsia glow. Her eyes

widened, the remote slipping from her fingers and falling back into the cushion.

"You've got to be kidding me."

Athena's laughter filled the room. Hana was simultaneously outraged and embarrassed, glaring upwards at the unseen AI.

"Are you fucking serious?!"

Athena's laughter continued, louder now. "You said a distraction," the AI chirped mirthfully, a hint of smugness infiltrating her typically monotonous voice. "This is distracting. And, may I remind you, you made no specifications other than 'distracting.'"

Hana groaned and fell back in her seat, rubbing at her burning face. There was a dip in the couch beside her as Satya sat down.

"What seems to be the problem?" the architech inquired. Somehow, her innocence only made the situation worse.

"Athena chose *Hero of My Storm* for a movie," Hana grumbled.

Satya blinked. "And that's a problem because...?"

Hana removed her hands from her face and looked up, her cheeks tinged a fiery red. "It's a problem because *I'm in it*."

Satya's brows shot upwards. "You aren't kidding, are you?"

Hana groaned louder, rubbing at her eyes with one hand in exasperation. "Dead serious."

Satya chuckled, but politely attempted to muffle the sound behind her hand. "I do believe that we are inclined to watch it now," the architech laughed.

Hana tried her best to glare, but it was hard to be intimidating while her face was as red as a beet.

"Fine. But I swear to god, if you say a word of this to anyone, I *will* end you."

Satya chuckled again as the opening credits began to roll.

"I'm *very* intimidated— look how much I'm shaking."

Hana scoffed in mock offense, settling back into the couch.

"You've been hanging around *me* too much."

Satya nudged her with her elbow and smiled. "As if that's a bad thing."

Hana's stomach flopped, and she stuttered for a response for a moment before crossing her arms over her chest and turning back to where her face was on the screen.

"Just shut up and watch."

Hana tried watching for a while, but the boring plot and toneless characterizations were putting her right to sleep. She cast a sideways glance at Satya, who was intently watching the movie with focused, slightly narrowed eyes.

An idea came to mind, and she was perturbed when it did not leave as instantaneously as she would have liked. As soon as she whisked it away, after a few moments, it was back again.

The minutes dragged on, the movie still building up to its anticlimactic climax, and the idea grew and grew until her tired brain could think of nothing else and with an inward sigh, she relented.

(She backed up for the jump, a looming trench before her, and took her running start.)

Hana scooted over an inch or two, her arm lightly brushing Satya's, and tentatively leaned against the architect's warm side.

(She jumped. The space below was deep, her body soaring through the air, and—)

Satya glanced down at her, confusion dancing in her eyes, but didn't move away. Rather, she shifted slightly, angling her body in a way that granted Hana a more comfortable position.

(—landed.)

The movie played in the background, but Hana was so, so tired, and so she closed her eyes and let her head fall back on Satya's shoulder.

The noise grew quieter and quieter until there was nothing but silence, and she knew sleep had found her once more.

Snow fell.

"I'm still with you," Kim said, flashing Hana a pearly white smile.

A terrible scream tore through the air. Hana's vision went black. She was falling.

Down, down, down, down. There was fire in her eyes. Kim was screaming, or maybe it was her.

Her boosters went online. She activated them, landing hard, but alive. There was a horrible crash beside her, metal and blood flying in every direction.

Her heart beat very fast. She counted the seconds.

One, two, three. One, two, three.

Kim was dead. She had to be.

Her vision was going dark again.

One, two, three. One, two—

That horrible scream racked the sky again, rattling her bones. She blacked out.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I'm sorry."

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry.

I'm—

Blaring alarms jerked Hana awake, and she squinted open her eyes to adjust to the flashing red lights adorning the common room.

"Athena!" she yelled over the screaming sirens. "What's going on?!"

"An intruder has bypassed my security system and entered the building," the AI responded, sounding upset. "I cannot detect them anywhere. The last place my sensors went off before the system shut down was the communications tower, eight minutes ago."

Hana jumped to her feet, turning to see Satya groggily opening her eyes beside her. She offered the architech a hand and helped pull her to her feet.

"Someone's infiltrated the building," she said when Satya cast her a bewildered look. "You go check communications tower C, I'll get B."

Satya nodded sharply, her dark eyes becoming more and more clear as her mind caught up with her body. "Understood." She paused. "Actually, before you go, take this."

The architech waved her hands, brows knit in an expression of deep concentration, knitting strands of light together until a cleaner, smoother version of Hana's light pistol lay in her hands.

Hana was stunned. "You looked over my blueprints?"

Satya flushed and handed her the gun. "While you were comatose, yes. It was a good distraction while you healed."

Hana weighed gun in her hand, thoroughly impressed. "Thank god you were bored, then. Let's move."

Hana took off, her hair mussed and clothes wrinkled, but her brain keenly focused on the infiltrator.

She sprinted towards tower B, eyes scanning the hallways for anything unfamiliar, and promptly crashed into Lena. They only managed not to fall by grabbing onto each other.

"Hana!" Lena exclaimed, breathless. "You heard, too?"

Hana nodded. "Are they not in the communications towers? Any of them?"

Lena shook her head. "None. This cuck sure knows how to pull a bloody good one."

Hana frowned, raving her mind for any idea where this intruder would go, and who they were.

"Have you tried the archives?"

"Yeah. Aleks and Mei are down there right now."

"What about the tech room?"

"Lúcio said he was going to go check that out."

Hana froze, realization hitting her like a ton of bricks. "Son of a bitch."

Lena blinked. "What?"

Hana took off running again, knowing Lena was hot on her heels.

"Widowmaker!"

Lena went silent after that, keeping pace with her easily. The sound of wailing sirens filled the entirety of Watchpoint: Gibraltar. Red lights illuminated dim hallways as they traversed deeper and deeper into the base until they reached the brig.

"Athena!" Hana called. "Access code: 17620-A5!" The door opened immediately, and Lena didn't have the time to question how she knew what the code was before Hana was vaulting down the steps, taking two, three, four at a time. At the base, she threw open the metal door, and a flash of blue beside her told her that Lena had made it, too.

She skidded to a halt in front of Widowmaker's door and smashed the electronic keypad with the palm of her hand. The door opened slowly, Hana's chest heaving with the exertion of sprinting across Overwatch's largest base.

Hana expected to find the room empty. She didn't expect to see Widowmaker sitting on her bed, eyes closed serenely.

"You're... still here?" Hana panted weakly.

The sniper cracked open an eye to look over her visitors, before sighing and closing it again.

"Is there any reason why I would not be?"

Lena stepped forward, eyes blazing. "We've got a fucking intruder in our base and we have no idea who or where the *fuck* they are. You contacted them, didn't you? Tryin' to get them to break you out?"

Widowmaker sighed again, sounding equally annoyed and bored when she spoke.

"As much as I would like to get out of this place, I am not an idiot. I did not contact anyone—I do not even have my communicator. The man with the visor took it when 'e brought me in."

Hana and Lena glanced at each other nervously.

"That's all I've got," Hana muttered after a moment. "That was the only idea I had." Lena ran a haggard hand through her hair, gritting her teeth as she thought.

Widowmaker hummed, snapping them both from their thoughts.

"I will help you find this... intruder," the sniper said, "on two conditions."

Hana and Lena shared another look, uncertainty in both of their gazes, before Hana nodded with a small shrug. Lena sighed.

"What do you want?"

Widowmaker smirked.

"I want out of this cell," she said, "and I need my visor. No one can hide from my sight."

"Do you see anything?"

"*Non.*"

"How about no."

"*Non.*"

"Now?"

"Be quiet, you *imbecile.*"

Sneaking Widowmaker around the base wasn't that difficult, what, with Athena and everyone else on the hunt for the mystery intruder, but it was still finicky. Lena had gone to go snatch the visor from Winston's lab while Hana got Widowmaker to a decent vantage point, and now, it was up to the sniper to find the unfamiliar heat signature.

Hana was patient. She'd seen Widowmaker in combat, and knew that her infrared sight was not to be taken lightly. Lena, on the other hand, was bouncing on the balls of her feet with anxiety, glancing around on the balls of her feet as if she expected Jack to jump out of nowhere and give them all restraining orders.

"The big man with the shield is in the large room with the kitchen. The floating Omnic is in one of your 'angars..."

The spider-like goggles' lenses shifted, and Widowmaker turned her head elsewhere.

"The Bastion unit is patrolling the outside with one of the Shimada brothers. The doctor and the young Amari are heading towards the eastern complex." The sniper froze suddenly, and Lena jumped to her feet.

"What is it?!"

"...Eastern towers, observation deck," Widowmaker said quietly. "You'll find your intruder there."

Hana also stood, grabbing her gun.

"Take her back to her room," Hana told Lena. "I'm gonna radio Angie, 'cause she and Amari are close to the location of the intruder, and go check it out."

Lena nodded and drew her in for a quick hug. "Stay safe," said the Brit.

Hana patted her back. "You too."

They parted, Lena grabbing Widowmaker and leading the sniper away. Hana waited until they were out of sight before hopping down from the perch and darting over to a communication pad on the far wall.

"Song to Ziegler, come in," she spoke into the small, wall-imbedded device.

Static.

Hana pressed the button again, dismayed.

"Song to Amari, please respond." Nothing. Gnashing her teeth and muttering a curse under her breath, Hana took off towards the eastern towers. When she found the next comm center, she tried again, smashing the button with her thumb.

"Song to Ziegler... *Dammit*, Angela."

She ran hard. Her lungs burned, and the old injury on her knee was starting to raise its weary head from the ground. She didn't pay it any mind. The hallways blurred one into the next, and eventually she gave up trying to reach Fareeha and Angela through comms and get to them in person. A sign flashed on her right, E-F1.

She was close.

"Athena," she called out at the base of the eastern staircase. "Where are Fareeha and Angela?"

"...Top floor of the eastern tower, heading towards the observation deck," said the AI after a moment, very clearly upset. "My communications are jamming. I need to go help Winston. Sorry, Hana, you're on your own."

"But Athena. I know where— oh, son of a fuck."

She climbed the stair quickly, her legs screaming in protest, bare feet coming down hard on the metal steps. She gripped her pistol tightly, watching the floors pass by the higher and higher she climbed. E-F4, E-F5, E-F6, E-F7. *E-F7*.

She opened the door with a quiet hiss, stepping into the deadly hallway cautiously. There were no sirens shrieking, no red lights flashing here. Hana caught sight of Fareeha and Angela walking down the hallway towards the observation deck, and followed them slowly.

Angela trailed behind her, confusion bright in her blue eyes, but wielding her pulse pistol with confidence nonetheless. Fareeha was pacing forward, her expression fixed with rage, but moving as if— *as if she knew exactly where she was going*.

They entered the observation deck. Hana caught the door just before it closed, and peered inside. A small part of her was trembling with fear, while the rest of her burned with confusion and suspicion.

Fareeha stopped abruptly, squaring her shoulders and setting her jaw.

"Mom."

The intruder turned from the large window, a small smile breaking out on her aging face.

"Ah, Fareeha," Ana said. "It's been so long."

Chapter End Notes

Okay I'm p proud of this one even though it's unedited. Like... @Blizzard you should hire me as a storyboard direction because Hana STILL needs a FUCKING backstory.

Also guys hit me up on Xbox One if you have it bc I'm so lonely over there and would love some people to play Overwatch with.

See you next week. Love you all.

- Ace.

storms over paradise

Chapter Notes

???????? idk guys depression does weird shit to you 10/10 would not recommend

I hope your december's are going well. I know that there's final's going around murdering every student in its wake so just... stay safe out there

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Hana watched, stunned, as Ana took a step forward, arms opened in a gesture of goodwill and vulnerability.

"You've grown well," said the old woman carefully, her expression and tone warm, though her eyes narrowed in scrutiny, "but you are not happy to see me."

Fareeha's fists were clenched tightly. Every muscle in her body was coiled with tension. "You came back."

Ana's face fell, as did her open arms. "I did, and without telling you, which is why I presume you are so upset, my child."

Fareeha's jaw tightened impossibly further. "You didn't tell me, yes, I figured that much out," she snapped. "But also, what the hell is *this*? You send everyone on a wild goose chase just to get a moment alone with me when you could've easily arranged that with me beforehand?!"

Ana frowned. "Fareeha—"

"Don't *'Fareeha'* me!" snarled the Egyptian angrily, eyes blazing with rage. "It's been *ten fucking years*, and only *now* do you come back?! I worried about you! I never knew *when* or *if* you'd send another letter. I never knew if you were lying when you said you were okay. You'd already died once. I never knew if, one day, you'd leave me again." Fareeha choked on a sob, but quickly swallowed her agony before it could choke her, her voice returning as a gravelly roar.

"Do you have any idea what keeping your secret did to me? Do you know how much that hurt? I lied to my parter, my best friend, my lover for your sake. I *trusted* her, and I *earned* her trust and I *betrayed* that trust for a woman I didn't even *know* anymore!"

Fareeha took a step forward, and then jerked back to where she was, her expression torn between anger and disgust.

"What did you think running would accomplish?! Were you really so selfish as to abandon your family, your friends, your fucking *daughter*, your daughter who never even had the chance to apologize for making your last conversation together an argument? Did you think that writing a letter would calm the storm you left in your wake? What the *fuck* did you think you would accomplish on coming back, on raising another hurricane to mask your entrance?

"Overwatch is a broken family, and we were just learning how to heal. One of us— someone who wasn't here before but *god damn* is she such a vital part of it now —almost died for us. She *died* for a cause she didn't know how to fight for, a family in which she didn't think she had earned a

name. She was just starting to get better— to this day, I still see so much of myself in her."

Fareeha took another step back. "A neglectful mother, an absent father, left alone to be savaged by war. We are alike in the way that we tore ourselves apart for our parents— we fought *hand* and *foot* for approval we would never receive, and then were left behind, two deaths shy of broken, when our carers died. And you know, it feels really fucking horrible, being left like that, in this shitty pit of wasted effort and the pieces you've torn yourself into for someone else's sake."

Hana winced, tempted to interject, but she held her tongue and kept her body still by the doorframe. Fareeha, meanwhile, pressed onwards, spite lacing every black word that spewed from her enraged tongue.

"I see her struggle, and I *know* that pain. I know it as well as I know war, but there are places we diverge. I fight for a cause, and she kills to follow orders. She seeks redemption for her sins, whilst I am decorated in my glory. Her family is dead, but I still have a mother."

Fareeha inhaled deeply, a long, calming breath.

"When I heard of your death, I had a safety net. I had my comrades in HSI. I had the scattered members of Overwatch. Angela flew to Egypt when I told her I wouldn't be able to make it to the funeral in time, just to hold me as I cried when we watched your empty coffin lower into the ground on a shitty, bar-grade television."

Ana stayed quiet throughout Fareeha's rant, her gaze downcast, silver hair glinting in the light the observation deck granted.

"But Hana? Hana had *no one*. She had to learn to protect herself. To save herself from breaking, she tore herself to *shreds* and put each piece so far away from who she used to be that she could no longer recognize herself in the mirror, could no longer recognize what was right and what was wrong. To her, what was right was anything that kept herself safe, and what was wrong was anything that led to disapproval. In her plight, she was given a squad to lead, but she didn't know how to lead them, because she didn't know the worth of a human life. All she knew was that if she received praise, regardless of the losses, then it was acceptable. It was moral. It was what she needed to do."

Fareeha shook her head with a heavy sniff, her voice cracking, tears dripping from her dark, anguished eyes.

"She didn't choose to join Overwatch, like we did. She didn't even *want* to join— she had no choice. She didn't see Overwatch as heroes. In her eyes, we were threats. She didn't understand why we fought so hard for others' lives. She never backed down from a fight, even when ordered, because she only ever received praise for destruction."

Fareeha laughed, splenetic and cold.

"She doesn't respond well to change, but she was learning. She was learning how to accept herself and the world for what it was. She was learning to *trust* again, learning to *feel*. She was finding her buried personality, and now *you've* returned. You, who knows nothing of what Overwatch is now, of the careful lines we've drawn, of the battles we've fought, of the sacrifices we've made. You, who would no doubt call her a child, the very title she's struggled her *whole life* to escape. You, who would make me *lie* to those I love in assumption my love for you was stronger. You, who nearly drove old man Reinhardt over the edge, who abandoned Gabriel when he needed you most. Where have you been, all these years? What was more important than the family you so carelessly discarded?"

She shuddered, wiping her eyes on her sleeve.

"And yet, here you are, pretending as if these past ten years of silence didn't mean a damn thing, as if they didn't tear Overwatch apart— as if they don't have the potential to do it again in a heartbeat."

Ana spoke up, then.

"Listen to me, Fareeha," she said, soft, but firm. "I left because I was ashamed of what I'd done, of what I'd *almost* done. I didn't mean for all of this to happen. I didn't mean to leave for so long, but I did. I'm sorry for making you worry."

"When I got shot down by that sniper, it was by a woman whom I had once known before her capture, someone I used to call my friend... I don't expect you to remember her, Fareeha— her name was Amélie Lacroix. Nowadays, she goes by the name Widowmaker. Anyways, at that point, I'd been fighting in the war almost my whole life. I'd seen traitors. I'd seen hired soldiers, and suicide bombers, and terrorism from the inside. I knew betrayal," the older woman shook her head with a weary sigh, "but nothing could have prepared me for such a raw show of broken trust. So, I ran."

Ana sucked in a breath, glancing upwards at the two women before her. "I will not deny what you have said— running was a cowardly, unbecoming move on my part, but I cannot go back to fix it. I cannot take back ten years of hiding from my shame. All that I can do is forge my own destiny. I am trying to move past my wrongdoings. That is why I came back."

Fareeha's face contorted into anger once more. "You seriously think that you can just barge in unannounced, without telling anyone else you were even *alive*, and be accepted into our ranks just like that?!"

Ana shook her head and took a step forward, frustration finally beginning to grace her aged features.

"No. I did not, which is why I did so much to talk to you two alone, because I knew it would be far too much to throw myself at the whole team all at once. I knew there would be resentment. I knew there would be pain, and struggle, and years before I could earn back the trust that I ruined. My child... I have done so much to harm you. I was not the parent that you needed growing up, and I am sorry." Ana sighed, turning to face Angela.

"And you, Angela. I have also done you a great wrong, this I know well. I specifically got you both because you two are the ones to whom I have done the most wrong. I wanted to apologize as genuinely as I could. I wanted your consent to my coming back. If you both wish me away, I understand. You have every right and reason to turn me back. If that is what you so decide, this is the last you will ever see of me."

Ana hung her head. "All I can do is apologize with words long-overdue and actions that I can only promise for the near future. What's done is done. I submit myself to your judgement."

There was a great lapse of silence. Hana held her breath. Her heart ached for Fareeha, and thrummed in stead of Angela's silence. She felt Ana's shame, a cold swath, even from where she was beyond the door.

Her lungs felt tight. Her old wound burned from within. She was cold,

"You're alive," Angela whispered weakly, voice cutting through the stilled air like a knife. "I am looking right at you, and I cannot convince myself to believe it. "

Fareeha's body immediately loosened. It actually looked as if the Egyptian might faint. Her eyes were wide with worry; gone was the vehement grudge she held against her mother, replaced now with immense concern.

"Angela—"

Angela raised a hand to her face. She was shaking violently. "There was no body to bury. There was nothing left behind but a beret and broken glass from the scope of your rifle. I couldn't even try to save you— is my job to keep people alive. When you disappeared, when you died, I was *crushed*. Not only did it make me feel like I'd failed my friends, it shattered my confidence. I strive to become better, to make more advanced technology in case anyone I cared about ever died again. And do know what came of that?"

A laugh burst from her, but it was weak and full of venom.

"I can bring people back from the dead. I can do that now, because of you. And it hurts me every time I do it because *I* have to look into their glassy eyes, at their fatal wounds, and stain my hands red with their blood. *I* have to hook them up my spiderweb of machines, and not even I know if they will live.

"Humans were made to die. But because of you... Because of you, I've *beaten* death. I turned Gabriel into a monster. I've made myself impervious to physical pain. I replaced my spine with mechanical implants to better maneuver in the air, to save lives more efficiently, to be able to get there in time." Hana winced at how betrayed, how *subdued* the doctor sounded. Angela was so close to falling apart, and she was not even trying to hold herself together anymore.

"Angela, *please*," Fareeha said, turning her back on Ana to face instead the woman she loved, holding her hands out to cup the blonde's face. "You're enough. You've always been enough. You don't have to be anything else."

Angela's face was pallid and blank, but her eyes were deep, wet oceans of disorientation and pain. "I know that, Fareeha. I know that now. But ten years ago, when I was torn with emotion, wrought with pain, I did not."

The tears rolled down the doctor's cheeks freely. Hana's stomach turned with contrite, but she knew she couldn't do anything. This wasn't her argument to fight, her burden to bear. She wasn't even supposed to be hearing this conversation. She didn't fully understand the gravity of the situation. She realized, then, that she really didn't know *anything* about what was going on.

Every instinct begged her to leave, but her feet were rooted to the spot.

"Times have changed. I have changed. We've all changed in your absence, Ana. I don't know what your return will do for Overwatch, if it will be for better or worse. I cannot even begin to predict what the others will think when they find out. You understand that."

Ana nodded, pursing her lips.

"Angela," Fareeha murmured. "We should call a meeting. Everyone deserves to know. Only then, when we have a say from everyone, can we decide what to do with this. We cannot deny her stay simply because of our own scars and grudges."

Angela sobbed and nodded, burying her face in Fareeha's shoulder as the Egyptian gathered the blonde up in her mechanical arms. Ana stayed silent, her face twisted with shame.

"Angela," the old woman started, "Angela, my daughter, I am sorry. I know I filled the void your parents left, and I know it must have hurt to lose another loved one. That is why you cling so

fiercely to those you love now. You cannot lose anyone else, not after everything you've already lost. I know that a great portion of that fear is entirely my fault, and I am so, so sorry for abandoning you."

She stepped forward, tentative. "My being here will not fix everything. It may not fix anything at all, but I will try my best to make up for the years of my absence, for you and Fareeha both, until the day I die. And, if Overwatch will let me, I came back to stay, to fight by your side once more. Both of you, my children."

Fareeha glanced up at Ana, her own eyes glistening with tears. "I'll..." she started, voice thick and halting. "I'll call the meeting. We just need some time to collect ourselves."

Ana nodded in understanding. "Take all the time you need."

And it was then that Hana decided she had seen far too much. She pried herself away from the doorway, stepping back, and was surprised to find jealousy boiling to the tip of her tongue. Why was she envious of them? There was nothing to resent. Did she envy their grudges? Their ability to speak freely to one another?

Hana shook her head, aiming to head back towards the stairwell, but freezing in the middle of the hallway, darkness creeping in at the edges of her vision.

Had she been the child her parents wanted, would she have had a relationship like that? Would she have been comforted so eagerly by her parents in times of suffering? Would she have been loved so unconditionally? Would they have had to die? Would she have been able to protect and please them better? Had she been a better daughter, would they not have burned in the destruction of the Omnic she failed to kill until everyone she loved had died? Was she only strong because she felt pain? Was she only strong to null the broken edges of her wearied mind?

"No," she muttered through grit teeth. "They did this to you. They never loved you. Don't fool yourself. You have no family." After a moment, she shook her head again. "No, that's wrong. Overwatch is your family now. You are *not* alone."

She exhaled, the heat clouding her head fading somewhat, but she could still feel its presence in the back of her mind.

"I have a family," she muttered. "I'm better than my parents. Accepting help does not make me weak. I am *not* broken."

The stairwell loomed before her. Had she really climbed it all in such a short period of time? Now that the rush of adrenaline had faded, she was starting to realize just how ridiculous her cross-base sprint had been.

Exhaustion settled over her shoulders. Not physical exhaustion, but emotional exhaustion, and combined with the burden of secrets she wasn't supposed to be privy to, her legs felt leaden. Each step down the staircase fell heavier than the last. The sirens still blared angrily as she entered the central eastern corridor, but she could only hear them in the back of her mind.

What did she do, now, with the information she'd been exposed to? Did she take it to Winston and Athena and notify them of their revenant intruder? Did she bury it deep within herself until or *if* Fareeha even broke the news in person?

"What do I do?" she asked herself quietly, drowned out by the wailing alarms. "What do I do with this?"

And nobody was there to answer her, to pull her out of the thick fog of confusion and unknowing.

She knew herself well enough to know that she'd never been good at finding her way again. She knew that, once lost, she didn't yet have the power or strength to pull herself out of the well, and she didn't know how— Hana had never learned, never asked, never been taught (never thought she'd ever need to until now).

"What the hell do I do?" she muttered, slumping against the wall and sliding to the floor with a heavy thud. "What *can* I do?"

What *could* she do? That, she thought, was the even bigger issue. This situation was completely foreign to her. She'd never been exposed to secrets, and had never needed to keep them until she joined Overwatch, and the scars on her skin became too numerous to hide. She knew what she *should* do, tell somebody, but was that really the right course of action for this particular predicament?

Hana didn't know. She had not a semblance of an idea, and it was gnawing at her like acid. What was worse was that she couldn't comfortably and quietly ask Angela for help this time. This time, she was on her own.

Well, she thought, *you ought to learn how to pull your own weight at some point*.

Abruptly, the sirens turned off, the red lights retreating back into the walls from whence they came, leaving her in total silence.

"Communications systems have been restored," Athena's voice chimed overhead. Hana hardly heard her, but her mind processed the words nonetheless, and her feet were moving before she could completely comprehend the action. She was heading back towards where she and Lena had diverged. Of course, she had no idea *why*, but she had nowhere else to go and nothing left to do.

The intercoms crackled. Hana paused.

"Everyone, please meet in the briefing room," Fareeha's voice droned overhead. "I have found the intruder."

Hana continued on. It was entirely likely that she would not head back to the briefing room, as she already knew the identity of the mystery intruder, and the reunion was one she didn't think she'd be able to bear witness to. Before her arrival, Overwatch had been an extremely close-knit network. She'd read as much from the archives. And, from what she'd just seen on the observation deck, this reunion would be tearful and heartfelt. They would speak of moments and feelings she would not understand because she wasn't in Overwatch before, and hardly considered herself to be a part of the family it was now.

She knew who Ana was, and knew that almost everyone else knew who she *was*, but she didn't *know* Ana, so Hana would maintain her distance until she knew Overwatch was safe again, and she would be able to approach her friends and nothing would be thwarting. Of course, it was entirely likely she would be the one to comfort Lena in the aftermath, but that was as far as she would go for now. Ana was an enigma, a fresh threat to her newfound way of life. If she could avoid any disruption to the peace, she would.

"Hana, where are you going?"

She froze, turning her head to see Lena in the adjacent hallway, her glasses askew on her face as if she'd been running, which rally didn't surprise Hana.

"I don't know," she admitted. "Away from the briefing room?"

"But Fareeha said—"

"You'll know when you get there," Hana promised. "Trust me, you'll know the *split second* you walk into that room why I'm not going to be there. But I'll probably be in my room as soon as you're done, if you need me."

Lena blinked, abashed. "Hana, what do you—"

"It'll be fine," Hana lied quickly, flashing a grin that felt as sick and hollow as she did. "Don't worry."

Lena was visibly flummoxed, more questions eager to spill from her lips, but the Brit choked them down and nodded with some confidence before hurrying off.

Hana sighed, leaning heavily against the wall and rubbing her eyes with her hand.

"Damn it, D.Va— you've made such a fucking liar out of me."

Hours passed. The suspense was killing her. Perhaps she should have gone, despite how out of place she would have been amidst the raw emotion and tears, but it was too late to take anything back now. All she could do was wait.

Just a few more minutes, she kept telling herself, even as the third hour ticked by. *She'll be here in a few more minutes.*

In the end, Hana lost track of how much time was passing, having set up a small stream to detract herself from the wait, glad, for once, for the distraction her D.Va persona granted.

Eventually, a knock sounded on her door. Hana abandoned her stream immediately, turning off her screen without so much as a wave to face her visitor. Against all odds, it was Fareeha, whose face was sunken with exhaustion and eyes reddened from crying.

"Spar with me," croaked the Egyptian. Hana had half a mind to decline the offer, but she saw a glimmer of desperation dart across the older woman's gaze, and the 'yes' spilled from her lips before she could retract it.

"What was the briefing about?" inquired Hana as they walked towards the training range, feigning ignorance for Fareeha's sake.

"My mother, Ana Amari, came back."

Hana pretended to be shocked, her feet stopping with a squeak on the polished floor.

"Didn't she die all those years ago?"

Fareeha shook her head and opened the door to the training room. "No. Long story short, she faked her own death to get away from Overwatch and pursue a life of vigilantism, and then came back when the guilt of leaving was too much for her to bear."

Hana stepped inside, the lights turning on as soon as they detected her moving body. She beelined for the boxing tape and pulled a fresh roll from the rack.

"Do you have any idea why?"

Fareeha shrugged. "She listed the reasons in the briefing, but I've not yet tried to make sense of them, nor do I understand them. For all the ways we are alike, I doubt I will ever fully understand

what goes through her head."

"How'd she get even inside?" Hana asked next, wrapping the tape around her knuckles as Fareeha started applying padding to her prosthetic arms.

"She hired help from an outside source— someone who supposedly works for Talon, but will take other jobs if it benefits her. In this case, my mother paid something of a fortune for the help. I don't know if this 'outside help' is still around. Athena's running diagnostics now to memorize and build a firewall against the hack codes."

Hana nodded contemplatively, but did not respond, stepping onto the sparring mat and turning to face her opponent.

"Head?" she asked.

Fareeha nodded. "Head allowed."

Hana smirked and shifted her stance. "Don't hold back on me, Captain."

Fareeha grinned crookedly and raised her fists. "Wouldn't dream of it, Lieutenant."

By the time Hana was able to pin Fareeha for the third and final time, the windows on the far side of the room had gone dark in the aftermath of a lazy sunset. Hana was exhausted, sweat dripping from her skin, down her exposed back and drenching her sweatpants, but her head buzzed with the thrill of victory.

Fareeha laughed and took the hand Hana offered to help her up, rubbing at her bruised jaw where Hana had earlier landed a nasty uppercut, and licking at her bloodied lip.

"That was fun— you fight well. We should spar more often."

Hana chuckled, wiping blood from her nose. "Yeah, we should. That *was* fun. I hope our match served as a decent distraction for you."

Fareeha nodded appreciatively, picking up her previously discarded shirt from the floor and folding it in her arms.

"Come on, let's go get patched up." The Egyptian winced, fingers brushing over her split lip again. "Damn, you really landed a good one. Your uppercuts are much sharper than mine."

Hana grinned, tasting the salt blood and hard-won victory on her teeth. "That was the end goal. Although, as much as I would love to gloat, I must say you definitely have a better right hook than I do."

Fareeha clapped her on the back. "Let's hope Angela doesn't kill us."

Hana grimaced. "If that's the case, I'll just treat my nose on my own."

Fareeha eyed her warily. "Are you sure?"

Hana nodded. "It's not broken, and from what I've heard, I can safely guess that Angela's in a bit of a tender situation. She needs you right now, and you alone." She smiled, lopsided and somewhat faraway. "I can take care of myself. Go, do what you need to do."

Fareeha hesitated, and then nodded. "Thanks, Hana," she said, and then she was off, leaving

Hana alone in the dark corridor. Hana lingered for only a moment longer before starting back towards her room, exhaustion settling heavily on her eyelids and her strained muscles, the sweat on her skin was cooling and leaving an uncomfortable, lingering chill in its wake.

She'd poured all of her energy in her her and Fareeha's spar, and now her eyes could hardly stay open, her brain far too tired to think. So, when she arrived at a door, she didn't bother to read the name on the door, or bother to listen to the faint piano music coming from within its premises. She merely opened the door, assuming with all of her tired mind that it was her room, and not...

"Satya?" Hana asked dumbly, freezing in the doorway as the architech turned abruptly, startled. "What're you doing in my room?"

Satya blinked, brows quirking in befuddlement.

"...This is *my* room."

Hana stared, thinking back to where she had vaguely seen the name 'Symmetra' engraved on the door.

"Oh," she said dumbly, too tired to say anything else. "Sorry."

Satya stared back. "Your nose is bleeding."

Hana nodded awkwardly, shrinking back from he doorway. "Um, yeah. It is. I have a kit in my room that I was, uh, gonna grab." She swallowed. "I'm— I'm just gonna go. Sorry about that."

Satya worried her lip, taking a hesitant step forward. "There is a medical kit in my room," started the architech with careful hesitance, "and it is very late." Satya glanced at the wall, where a hardlight clock read 21:59 PM. "In fact, you may not have time to return to your quarters. Athena will be locking down the building any—"

The door to the room shut loudly, a grating click echoing throughout the orderly room.

"—second now."

Hana sighed and dragged her hand down her face, suddenly aware that she had not yet removed the tape from her knuckles.

"Why was I not informed of this?" She groaned. Satya's expression softened sympathetically.

"It was information given at the briefing earner this evening. In fact, I had completely forgotten until just now, else I would have given you more forewarning. I apologize."

Hana brushed off the apology with a nonchalant wave of her hand. "Okay, but— why is this even a thing?"

"A precaution."

"Oh, Jesus fuck." Hana rubbed at her bruised, throbbing face. "I don't even have a change of clothes."

Satya tilted her head. "Well, you could some use mine. I may not have anything that fits you, but it will be better than sleeping in sweat and blood. You may also use my shower if you so wish."

Hana groaned again. "I can't do that to you, Satya. I'd feel bad. This was my fault, anyways, for not paying attention. It wouldn't be fair if I just waltzed in here, used your shower, and dirtied

your clothes without having anything to give back."

Satya's lips curled into a small smile. "And if I am offering because I merely want to help?"

Hana tried to glare, but Satya's gesture was honestly too generous and too heartfelt for her to decline at this point.

"Are you sure, though? I wouldn't be a bother, would I? And be honest with me."

Satya shrugged. "You are my friend. I want to help you where I can, when I can. I find your company enjoyable. You are a typically well-maintained person. There are a great many reasons I could list."

Hana flushed. "I really haven't done that much. All I've done that's actually counted for a fuck is die to save a life and teach you how to hug."

Satya nodded and offered her a small roll of clothes. "And isn't it odd? Both of those things mean more to me than you could ever know."

Hana took the roll with a sigh. "Sap. I owe you one."

Satya smiled tentatively, the corners of her eyes wrinkling. "Nonsense."

Hana opened her mouth to argue and found, abruptly, that she had no reason to persist, so she graciously accepted her defeat with a nod. "Thanks, Satya."

The bathroom door closed behind her automatically before she could catch Satya's response.

The water was hot, burning across her bare skin. Each bead thudded against her body like a drum, hypnotic in its repetition. The world darkened and twisted, and suddenly, the ground beneath her feet was gone.

Water gushed into the open cockpit, the cold liquid washing around her and she gasped. Suddenly, it was everywhere, black and swirling and foaming and pouring into her mouth and her eyes and her lungs—

The sound of rushing water followed her back into consciousness.

Hana shut off the shower-head quickly, resting her head against the wet tile. "Not quite," she sighed, closing her eyes and trying to banish the sound of the ocean from her ears. "Almost better, but not quite."

Hana emerged from the bathroom, dressed and refreshed, wearing a pair of black running shorts and a silvery gray shirt that fell to her mid-thigh. Upon exiting the bathroom, Hana pushed the sleeves up to her elbows.

"Oh," said Satya from where she sat on her bed, carefully picking through a medical kit. "You showered quite fast."

Hana shrugged, clambering onto the bed after receiving a small nod of consent from Satya. "You get used to showering quickly when you're in the army."

That earned her a dainty laugh from the architech. Satya delicately plucked two painkillers from a

small, white bottle and a gauze strip for her nose.

"I hope you can take pills dry," the older woman jested, offering her the painkillers. Hana popped them into her mouth without hesitation, though swallowing came slower than it normally would have with water, but she wasn't going to complain.

"Again," Hana started awkwardly as Satya settled before her, removing the tape from the back of the gauze strip for her nose. "Thanks for this. I, uh, I appreciate it."

Satya hummed, placing the strip carefully on the bridge of Hana's nose. Hana winced at the pressure on the throbbing bruise, but remained perfectly still whilst the architech performed her ministrations.

The song playing softly in the background changed. Ah— she knew this one. *Für Elise*.

Satya gently pressed the gauze onto her face, smoothing it over with trained thumbs, a hint of hesitance in her lingering touch. Fondness burned within her, bubbling to the surface from where it had before been carefully contained.

"Satya," she blurted, the burst of bravery goading her onwards. "What are we?"

Satya's hands froze on her face. Piano filled the space between them for a dreadfully long time before the architech responded.

"I am not sure," Satya confessed, hands pulling away slightly. And then, "What would you like us to be?"

That got Hana thinking.

She thought back to the past months they'd known each other, the past weeks of keeping each other afloat when all the other wanted to do was drown. She thought back to late winter nights, making small talk over hot coffee, laughing quietly over something one or the other had said. She thought back to Kashgar, where she had so willingly sacrificed herself for Satya, Jesse, and Genji without fully understanding why. She thought back to twenty questions in Bangladesh, and when she returned from her parents' graves in Busan.

And she realized that, really, she didn't need anything more. This was enough. This was... this was everything she needed.

"This is enough," Hana said, smiling timidly. "This is all I need."

Satya's terse, careful expression relaxed. "I was afraid you would ask for more," the architech admitted, her hands returning to fix the gauze strip across her nose. "I have nothing left to give."

Hana shook her head as best she could without distrusting Satya's work.

"We're not like Fareeha and Angela," she said. "We're not like Jesse and Genji. I don't think we will ever be. But you know what? This is what works. This is what feels right, and I think that, as long as we're both comfortable, this is all it needs to be."

Satya nodded, but her mouth twisted. "That seems fair, but please do not feel obliged to say that if you believe my hesitance will only tamper this... camaraderie."

Hana huffed. "Have a little faith in me. I know what I'm getting myself into. If we both want it, then there's no sin in taking it."

Satya fought back a small smile, but Hana saw it dance in her eyes. "I suppose I'll just have to agree with you, then."

Hana grinned, and, for the first time in her young life, she felt complete. "Please. When am I ever wrong?"

Satya rolled her eyes. "Narcissist."

Hana barked out a laugh and reached across the bed to turn off the lights, settling herself beneath the sheets comfortably. After only a moment's hesitance, Satya joined her.

"D'you want to make a pillow barrier?" Hana asked over a yawn, suddenly remembering just how tired she was. "I wouldn't be offended."

"No," Satya replied softly, her body heat spreading quickly beneath the pale blue sheets. "This is fine."

Hana chuckled breathily, nuzzling into the soft fabric of the pillow.

"*Jal ja-yo*, Satya," she murmured, and was asleep before her eyes even shut all the way.

Chapter End Notes

The getting locked in a room was actually based off of a personal experience of mine in junior high where I accidentally walked in on like the college prep class first day of second semester but then there was a lockdown so I got trapped in a room with a bunch of older kids for about an hour. It was p funny - they were all super nice, too. Idk this chapter just reminded me of that so I decided to roll with it.

Have nice days/nights, take your meds, get a drink if you need one and live life my dudes

- Ace.

pulling thorns

Chapter Notes

unedited af but oh well y'know

CW: swearing, gore, the usual around here

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Hana slept on and off during the night. She would wake for brief moments, glance at the time shown on Satya's hardlight clock, and then she would be whisked away by dreams again; she never dreamt for very long, and the dreams were always too short and unfocused for her to make out any details— which was nice, considering how things used to be.

However, this particular bout of wakefulness had been going on for about ten minutes. It was 04:09 in the morning. She'd been waiting for sleep to take her once more, and it had not, which was somewhat unsettling, and it would no doubt come back to bite her come morning. Nevertheless, what could she do? She was comfortable. She would not forsake that comfort for something as minor as insomnia.

And so, in near-silence (the room was pleasantly quiet, with the faint sound of *Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-Sharp Minor* in purlieu), in innocuous restlessness, staring at a dim ceiling, laying next to a warm body, safe and at peace, her mind wandered.

She thought about nothing in particular, each lucid idea flitting into the next, aimless in arbitrary reverie. Her conscience drifted, from fleeting memories of the Colossal Omnic's giant shadow to glimpses of Manhattan a few weeks past. She skimmed over Kashgar, and listened to the argument in the Iceland shower room with deaf ears. She thought of who she used to be, compared to who she was now.

Satya shifted beside her. From where she lay on her back, Hana froze, not wanting to wake the architech by accident. She noticed then that the architech had taken off her prosthetic arm to sleep.

Alas, the older woman was already rousing.

"...Hana?" Satya murmured, blinking blearily, somehow still looking pristine despite having only just woken. "Can you not sleep?"

Hana pondered lying for a moment, but decided that she'd really done enough lying for one lifetime.

"Not really," she yielded, voice hushed despite the soundproof walls. "I've been able to sleep in bursts, but no more than ten minutes apiece."

Satya offered a small smile. "It has been much the same situation for me these past few nights."

Hana blinked. "Oh, I didn't wake you up? You looked pretty asleep to me."

Satya shook her head, shifting her position again to sidle up the headboard. She grabbed her prosthetic arm from a stand next to her bed, a stand Hana had no idea was there until now, and

slid the arm on with a subtle click. Satya moved her fingers experimentally a few times before giving a satisfied nod and turning back to her nightstand.

The architech pulled a datapad from a small drawer and began skimming through its contents. Curious as to what was on the datapad itself, Hana followed her up and peered over her shoulder.

"What're you doing?" she asked, unable to discern anything from the glowing screen.

"If neither of us can sleep," Satya replied gingerly, tapping on the screen with some sense of finality, "then we can at least make use of our time."

Hana worried for a moment that Satya meant for them to work, but then she saw the datapad's screen, and her brows skyrocketed.

"A Christmas Carol: Remastered? Really?"

Satya's cheeks flushed lightly. "I have never celebrated Christmas like they do in the west. I have been... educating myself."

Hana leaned into Satya as the old movie began to play.

"If it helps," Hana breathed, tucking into the relieving warmth Satya's body offered, "I've never really celebrated Christmas, either."

Satya quirked a brow. "Not even whilst a world-famous gaming champion?"

Hana shook her head, a morose smile cracking her face. "Last year, I spent my Christmas in a small, shitty army tent. Before that, I'd never even known the holiday existed. So, no. Not really."

Satya chuckled. "What childhoods we had," the architech mused dryly.

Hana barked out a sharp, bitter laugh, nudging Satya with her elbow before turning her gaze to the small screen before them, where the main character had just walked into the scene.

Time passed. Come morning, Hana's eyes were raw from staring at a screen for too long in the dark, and her voice was hoarse from laughing, but her chest was warm and Satya's smile hadn't faded in at least an hour, and Hana felt a little proud of herself for passing on the torch of goodwill to someone who meant the world to her and more.

There were only two people in the kitchenette when Hana and Satya arrived, still chuckling about a wisecrack Hana had let loose a few seconds prior to their arrival. Jesse sat slumped at the counter, munching over a bowl of soggy cereal, while Genji stood off to the side next to a glowing green charging station, from what Hana could see.

When the two women entered, both men glanced back to greet them, a muffled 'g'mmornng' emitting from full-mouthed Jesse, and a crisp nod from Genji.

"Hey," Hana greeted in turn, moving over to the fridge to pull eggs out for herself and Satya's breakfast.

Jesse swallowed loudly, coughing a few times to clear his throat, before speaking again, mischief and hidden meaning lacing his low tone.

"So," he drawled, lips curling into a devilish grin, his eyebrows waggling suggestively. "Did you two... y'know...?"

Hana, for her part (and for Satya's part, too, judging by the blatant confusion written all over her face), had no idea what on earth he was referring to.

"Did we *what*, cowboy?" Hana queried, her tone carefully guarded.

This must have thrown him off guard, apparently, because Jesse gawped for a moment before scratching at the back of his neck and gesturing to her clothes awkwardly.

"You're... uh... wearin' Ms. Satya's clothes," he stuttered. "So, y'know, I jus' thought that you might've...?"

Hana stared blankly.

Genji sighed from where he was. "Jesse wants to know if you two fucked," the cyborg deadpanned.

Hana continued to stare.

And stare.

And of the words she had heard, she didn't register them. Not really. They were words, of course — she knew that much. She knew they were words, words with meanings and definitions, and they had been put together to make a sentence. However, everything in her head had come to a screeching halt, and she was having a hard time breathing, so she couldn't exactly process the sentence as a whole. In fact, she felt rather light-headed.

And then it hit. It hit *hard*.

"Oh," she breathed, surprising herself with how quiet and calm her voice sounded despite the terrifying prospect she faced. "*Oh*. Yeah. No, we didn't."

Jesse sputtered. "But you're—"

"Is it really any of your business, Jesse?"

Everyone turned to the source of the newest voice, and Hana was startled to see Ana standing there peacefully, as if she'd been there the whole time (which, honestly, she might have been).

Jesse coughed uncomfortably. "N-no, ma'am."

Ana's smile widened in an almost threatening gesture. "It is rude to jump to conclusions, Jesse. I thought I raised you better."

The cowboy ducked his head. "My apologies, ma'am. I'll jus' keep my mouth shut."

Ana nodded in approval before turning towards where Hana and Satya lingered awkwardly. Her dark eye glanced over the both of them quickly, before the old woman turned to face Satya.

"I saw you at the briefing," she said. "However, I don't recall ever getting a name."

"Satya," the architech replied, though she made no move to further greet the old woman. "Satya Vaswani."

Ana nodded appreciatively and then turned to Hana, who shrank back from the sniper's shrewd

gaze.

"And you?"

Hana hesitated before sticking out her left hand for a shake, a false grin coming easily to her lips.

"I'm Hana Song, callsign D.Va. You've probably heard of me. I must say, it's a pleasure to meet *the* Captain Ama—"

Ana grabbed her arm roughly and pulled her close, the nimble fingers of one hand tracing the deep scar on the underside of her arm, where the tendon had been severed in Kashgar, whilst the other hand inspected Hana's senseless and permanently bent ring and pinkie fingers on her left hand.

"Nervous incapacitation," Ana observed, moving Hana's left arm this way and that. "Pinkie and ring fingers rendered immobile by an incision to the short and long head biceps brachii tendons."

Hana yanked her arm back, cradling her hand to her chest, and decided she rather didn't like Ana Amari.

"What's it to you?" Hana bit, biting the bait she knew was being dangled before her.

Ana smiled benignly. "You are no more than twenty. Someone so young should not have such grievous wounds."

Hana snorted. Satya placed a hand on the small of her back, which was hardly comforting, but it was an appreciated gesture nonetheless.

"I know war," Hana spat. "I'm a soldier, ma'am. Do not treat me as if I know anything less."

Ana chuckled, and Hana decided she might just detest her.

"My apologies," the sniper amended, eyes wrinkling with amusement at their corners. "I did not mean to offend. I was simply testing a hypothesis, which I have proved to be true. No doubt, you are the one Fareeha talked about."

Hana's eyes narrowed. "What do you mean?" she asked, even though she already knew the answer.

Ana, however, merely waved the questions off. "Never mind," the sniper mused. "It's nothing, child."

Something clattered and crashed to the ground. Hana swiveled to see Satya standing next to a broken mug, glaring sharply at Ana, fists clenched tightly.

"Hana," the architech seethed very quietly, "is *not* a *child*. It would do you well to remember that."

Ana blinked in surprise, and then laughed.

"I had forgotten. I'm sorry, Hana. That was wrong of me to say."

Hana bit her tongue and did not reply, opting instead to turn back to the scrambled eggs she had been making.

This dish was one she'd made many times in her youth, when her parents were too busy or too negligent to cook her anything. It was simple, it was filling, and it didn't taste half bad when made

right. She'd had time to master it. As a child, she'd had plenty of time to herself. Such silence had spurred her to pursue something more lively than bland walls and fake smiles.

To buy her equipment, she would crack into her parent's bank accounts and draw minuscule amounts of money at a time, enough so that it would get her what she needed but still be unnoticeable. Surely, the repercussions would have been ready if her parents had ever found out.

But they were dead, now. Hana had inherited their money and debts, and their memory still haunted her whenever she saw her face in the mirror.

She wasn't like them. She would never be like them. She didn't have to be perfect; she didn't have to be anyone else. This was enough. It would, of course, be another few years before she could persuade herself to accept that truth, but she was making progress in the right direction.

She hoped.

"Hana," Satya called out softly, jolting her from her reverie. "Coffee or tea?"

This was a diversion. Hana's heart throbbed gratefully for the architech, for her decision to trust her, for knowing exactly how to get her to calm down. She made a mental reminder to thank her for the distraction later.

"Coffee," she replied, turning the burner off and pulling out a set of plates for herself and Satya. "Thanks."

The architech hummed knowingly in response, and the silence that followed was not nearly as tense as it had been before.

For the third time that morning, the door to the kitchenette opened. In strode a bedraggled-looking Jack, his mask absent from his weathered face. Despite the early hour of the morning, he appeared to be dressed and ready for what the day would bring.

"Morning, soldiers," he greeted hoarsely, making a beeline to the expansive fridge to grab himself a protein shake.

"Good morning, Jack," Ana replied easily, following after him. "Where are you going? You look like you're about to head on a mission."

The old soldier shook his head and took a swig of his shake. "Not for me. I've got an assignment for Hana."

Hana's eyebrows skyrocketed, her hands freezing where they were pouring eggs onto a plate for herself. Some of her creation fell to the floor.

Ana quirked a brow. "Well, why not tell her, then? She's right here."

Jack whirled, squinting. "Is she? I forgot my glasses in my room."

"Yeah," Hana said with a grimace. "I can hear you loud and clear."

Jack cleared his throat.

"Well— we're, uh, Winston and I— we decided to send you and Angela on a grocery run."

Hana's mouth fell open, and she wasn't sure whether to be insulted or plain upset.

"You've got to be kidding me."

Jack scratched at his chin.

"We're almost out of food."

Hana narrowed her eyes in scrutiny, watching for even the slightest slip in Jack's stoic figure.

His hand twitched. The old soldier licked his lips and glanced away. He swallowed, his Adam's apple bobbing nervously.

The realization dawned on her, and she couldn't keep the accusatory tone out of her voice when she spoke.

"This is a *pity mission*."

Jack opened his mouth, closed it, and then sighed and rubbed his scarred brow. "I— Yes. It is."

Anger spiked within her, the pan of eggs clattering to the floor as she rounded on the aging soldier, a sneer twisting her lips.

"You *fucker*. I thought we were done treating me like a... a *child*." She hated the way her voice cracked on the last word, as if using the title physically hurt her. "I thought we were past this, Jack."

The old soldier held his hands up in surrender.

"I'm serious, we *do* actually need—"

"A fucking *pity mission*," Hana snarled, angrier at herself more than anyone, racking her brain for what she could have possibly done to deserve this. Was it Manhattan? Sparring with Fareeha? Getting locked in Satya's room? What had she done? There had to be a reason. There was no other explanation.

She raked her fingers through her bangs, muttering curses under her breath, her hands trembling.

She wasn't used to this. She thought she'd moved past the pressure of forced inferiority. She thought she'd moved past 'child' and 'D.Va.' And now, they'd made her a liar.

Again.

"Cut the bullshit, Jack," she bit out, sick of starving for an answer that would never come. "Why are you *really* sending me on this mission? What'd I do this time?" Because there had to be a reason. There *had to be*.

Jack hesitated, glancing at the general direction of Ana nervously, as if asking for help. After all this time, he still didn't know what to do with Hana, or how to communicate with her. He didn't try to understand her, and she didn't want to understand him. She wasn't all that surprised that the words seemed to slip away from his tongue as he stumbled for a response.

When he found one, it was strangled.

"It was actually Angela's idea. She wanted to speak with you. Alone. Out of base. Or something." He swallowed hard. "I wasn't supposed to tell you that."

And just like that, with Jack's simple admittance, the anger stirring within her was gone.

"Oh," Hana said, her shoulders slumping with relief. "It's all good, then." She let out a small laugh. "It's... It's all good. I didn't do anything." Again, she combed her fingers through her hair. "Everything's fine. We're fine."

Jack still looked concerned and perhaps a smidgen afraid, but he made no further comment on the matter, instead opting to clear his throat and straighten his submissive posture.

"So, now that that's all cleared up, I can tell her that you'll be going?"

Hana nodded. She trusted Angela.

"What time will we be heading out?" she asked.

Jack shrugged. "Sometime after breakfast, I think. I'll have Athena give you an hour's notice when Angela confirms."

"Done deal, Commander," she muttered as she ducked beneath the counter to start cleaning up the mess she'd made upon dropping her pan of eggs.

There were many pairs of footsteps that left the kitchenette, and Hana heard Ana say something just before the door closed, but she couldn't make out what. The other four must have all left, then. She was unsettled by how much that relieved her.

As soon as she and Satya were alone again, Hana let out a sigh and slumped against the underside of the counter, leaning her head against the cold metal and closing her eyes. She heard Satya's feet tread carefully across the kitchen floor before a warm, familiar body settled down next to hers.

"I can't control it," Hana lamented, opening her eyes to glare at her knees. "Sometimes, I get so angry that I can't even think. And I can't control it." She clenched her hands together tightly. "It's killing me, Satya. I hate being bitter. I hate not being able to move on."

Hana let loose another snort, this one sounding thicker, as if it were being forced from a choked throat. "Is it my fault? I'm looking for someone to blame and I'm drawing a blank, Satya. I don't want to deal with this anger. Not anymore. I'm too tired." She rubbed at her burning eyes. "I'm really fucking tired."

A hand settled gingerly on her shoulder, and Hana leaned into the warmth desperately, as if it would disappear at any given moment.

"It is not your fault," Satya said. "Do you understand? It was not your fault. You can rest, now. You are not to blame."

Hana huffed, choking back the lump forming in her throat. "I know. Really, I do. Sometimes I just need to convince myself that I actually *believe* that much."

Satya didn't reply, so they spent the next good hour huddled beneath the dank kitchenette counter, staring, in silence, at the broken pieces of mug and egg that littered the uncleaned ground.

"Hana," Athena called overhead. "You have one hour. Dr. Ziegler will meet you in Hangar 18."

Hana stood carefully, taking mind not to step on any egg or fragmented porcelain.

"I will clean it up," Satya offered, taking her proffered hand. "Go, get ready for your trip."

"Thanks," Hana said, squeezing her hand because she really fucking meant it.

Satya's eyes glinted knowingly. "Of course."

Angela met her in Hangar 18. It was snowing, and flakes flitted into the long, open hangar aimlessly. The doctor was wearing a black turtleneck with a white peacoat and a pale blue scarf. Hana donned a beige and dark gray sweater and a winter coat that had cost her nothing short of a fortune.

"Are you ready?" Angela asked as she approached. Behind her, Hana saw a small transport jet, up and running and ready to go.

Hana stepped onboard the small hovercraft, barely managing to keep her stomach from turning when they took off, and ignoring the empty feeling beneath her feet as they set out across the small expanse of water that separated Watchpoint: Gibraltar from the actual city of Gibraltar.

"Ready as I'll ever be, doc."

Chapter End Notes

Guys it's almost the end and I'm a little freaked out

- Ace.

on the sea

Chapter Notes

Wow, late update but HEY I'm back now. Just had a hectic Christmas.

Anyways you guys' comments are all wonderful. Thanks for keeping me motivated to finish this story because honestly, it's been pretty hard these past few weeks.

CW: none because this chapter is healthy and pure. you guys deserve it.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The sky was white. Snow flecked and melted against the windshield. It would have been beautiful, if not for the location, high above the Alboran Sea. Hana squirmed in her seat—the gunner's seat—feeling, not for the first time, incredibly uncomfortable and cramped. There was hardly space enough to move around, and it reminded her far too much of the small hoverjet she had stolen to visit Busan. She would have much preferred to sit in the back, but there was not nearly enough room to fit her there.

Which, she supposed with a frown, was all thanks to the hovercar taking up the entire cargo hold of the small drop ship.

"Who thought this arrangement was in any way convenient?" Hana grumbled, tugging at the harness around her midsection for umpteenth time that minute. The gunner's seat was smaller than the pilot's, and had many more controls and too little room for her elbows. The pilot's headset over her ears and mouth was too big to be comfortable, and the plastic of the mic was digging into her cheek.

Angela laughed good-naturedly at her misfortune, sounding somewhat amused over the speakers, as the two were in separate cockpits.

"We needed a secretive location for a base," said the doctor. "It may not be convenient when it comes to getting food, but it works well when it comes to everything else. I will admit, having the car taking up the entire cargo hold was... not one of our better ideas."

Hana huffed, adjusting the helmet on her head. "You think? It isn't even a *good* car. That thing's *ancient*."

Angela chuckled, soft enough to sound like static in Hana's ears.

"That's fair. However, Torbjörn has made some significant modifications to it this last week."

Hana's frown deepened and she barely refrained herself from rolling her eyes.

"Oh, like *that* makes it any better. Next time, hire Satya. I bet she could make a car a billion times better than that hunkajunk in half as much time it takes Old Man Torb to build one of his shitty little turrets."

She could hear the shrug in Angela's nonchalant tone.

"I would have, if I were closer to her, but I'm afraid you are the only one in Overwatch who has

successfully held a conversation with Ms. Vaswani for longer than two seconds."

Hana opened her mouth to object, but found that the statement was painstakingly true, and held her tongue. Instead, she settled for grumbling as she had been a few minutes prior: damn Jack for sending her on this mission. Damn Angela for always managing to find a bright side to things. Damn the ocean for being too fucking long. Damn the slow drop ship. *You know what, damn it all*, she thought bitterly, glancing out her side window and cringing at the vast expanse of blue she saw.

"I hate the ocean," she muttered, closing her eyes to block the looming water from her vision.

Angela's calming voice over the comm was a welcome soother. "I know," the doctor said. "I know, *lieblich*. We'll be there in a few minutes."

Hana opened her eyes to glare at the dashboard.

"I'm sorry," she said with a tired sigh, finally giving up her anger in favor of the ever-present exhaustion. "I'm being like *that* again."

"It's all right," Angela replied easily with a warm smile, glancing out the back of her window to meet Hana's dismal gaze. "It's who you are, past everything else. If you are unsatisfied with it, then you will figure it out on your own time. No one has the right to tell you who or what to be. Anyone who tells you otherwise will answer to me."

Hana snorted, trying to find reason to stay annoyed, but a wry grin twisted her lips no matter how hard she tried to fight it. "You're such a *mom*," she huffed, squinting in an attempt to recollect herself, despite the laughter shaking her shoulders.

The doctor's blue eyes twinkled. "I do what I can. After all, someone needs to fill that role. Especially in your case."

Warmth budded in Hana's chest, and her twisted grin eased as Angela turned back around.

"I appreciate the gesture," Hana murmured. The old her would have tried to turn down the help, but she was wise enough, now, to realize that the void her parents left was a void that desperately needed filling. She was nineteen years old, world-famous, scarred by war for years and more, and she was just learning what it was like to grow up with a family. "I understand I can be difficult to deal with sometimes. So, um, thanks for sticking with me."

Angela ducked her head and did not respond. (That was okay— Hana felt it, too.)

They sat in silence for a good while, the only sound between them the whirl of the engines, even as the city of Gibraltar gradually came into view.

They landed in a small clearing a few miles out from the city itself. Getting the hovercar out of the drop ship was a hassle, but they managed, somehow, without denting or scraping anything.

Angela asked her if she wanted to drive into the city. Hana accepted eagerly, despite not having driven a car in what felt like ages but was probably only a few years time.

The ride over the dirt road to Gibraltar was quiet. Angela shifted through the staticky radio channels absentmindedly, trying to find one that at least played music other than vague, nonsensical gibberish. The snow had started to fall a little harder, but Hana could still see quite far. That was a relief. Snow had always unsettled her after the sixteenth strike against the colossal

Omnic— not as much as water, but it still made her grip the steering wheel a little tighter the farther and farther they drove.

"Hana," Angela said, turning off the radio entirely, giving up on trying to find anything that wasn't white noise. "How are you?"

Hana thought about her answer for a long while before responding.

"The best I've ever been," she replied. "I mean, that isn't really saying much, but things are starting to look up, I think. It's... It's relieving. I'm not paranoid around you guys anymore. I'm not throwing myself senselessly into battle, and D.Va has disappeared entirely. I mean, I'm not 100% yet and I don't think I ever will be, but I'm healing."

Angela nodded. "I've noticed improvement. I'm glad. What about the nightmares? Have the memories been bad?"

Hana bit her lip, mulling over her options before continuing while she had the courage. "They're still tainted red, but it's muted, like static. I can't make out visual details, but I hear it more vividly." She shrugged. "The depression's been hard. My parents left scars that aren't going to heal for some time. There's this lingering anxiety I can't tame, no matter what Zenyatta orders— er, teaches me."

Angela frowned. "I see. I'll see what I can do to help you, these coming weeks. How about your relationships? Anyone that's causing you stress?"

Hana would call it prying if she didn't already know how much the doctor cared, and that her intentions were well and good.

"I don't talk much to anyone other than you, Fareeha, Lena, Satya, and Widowmaker." At the last name, Angela quirked a brow, but pursed her lips and didn't interrupt.

Hana continued with trepidation. "Everyone leaves me alone for the most part, as per my request. They've been really nice about it." She grimaced. "I'll admit, I don't really like being around Ana. Or Jack, for that matter. They can't quite wrap their heads around me being an adult, I guess. Lena and I are doing fine. I trust you and Fareeha. Satya and I are..."

The words died in her throat. After a heavy pause, she tried again. "We're..."

What were they? Hana knew nothing of relationships. Any title she tried to label her and Satya's connection as sounded false and wrong. She'd said before that perhaps they didn't need a title, that they didn't need to be anything else, but it sure made describing it less convenient. Still, she tried her best to explain it to Angela, who deserved to know nothing but the truth.

"We're close. Really close. It's... it's good for us both. We're helping each other heal."

Angela nodded again. "That's good, *liebling*." A pause. "Do you know why I'm asking?"

Hana shrugged. "No, but it doesn't really matter to me. I trust you. It's not like you're going to use this information to manipulate me. You're not trying to hurt me." Fear stabbed her heart, and her hands trembled where they clenched the steering wheel. "Right?"

Angela immediately realized her mistake, and placed a soothing hand over Hana's, her expression apologetic. "No, no. Of course not." She kissed Hana's hair in a gesture that was far too motherly than anything Hana was used to. It made her heart and eyes burn and the car swivel slightly off course before she got it back under control.

"I'm asking because I worry," Angela admitted softly into Hana's chestnut locks. "I'm asking

because I watched you die before my eyes, and it is not an image I can forget easily. I cannot stop myself from checking on you sometimes just to make sure your eyes are not glazed over, as they had been, to make sure your body is not bathed in blood. I'm asking because I care about you, because nobody else did when you were young and open to exposure."

Angela pulled back slightly to look down at her. "You are a touch-starved and emotion-deprived young woman, having given all you had to a world that only cared when you were on a screen. I worry about you, Hana. I love you as I would have loved my own family, had they lived through the air strikes that fell over Europe during the First Omnic Crisis." The blonde hesitated, smiling gently. "I just wanted you to know that."

Hana allowed herself to savor the moment, as it surely would not come again. "Oh," she breathed, soft as a summer breeze, knowing now how vulnerable Angela was, and the placement of her own feelings. "Um, thanks for telling me. It—" she swallowed the lump in her throat and gave a watery grin. "It really means a lot."

Angela rubbed her shoulder and turned the radio on again, fiddling once more with the knobs on the dashboard.

"Of course," the doctor reassured. "Of course."

The grocery store was not crowded. Which was to be expected, as it was Christmas Eve, after all, Angela told her. They had no trouble getting all that they needed, which was an awful lot for a team of only eighteen. Hana dropped a bad pun or two, especially in the breads section. ("You *knead* to lighten up— I don't think you're... *bready* for this next one.) All that they really got was flour, eggs, an assortment of dairy products, meat, some fruits, an array of multicolor vegetables, a worrisome heap of peanut butter, and copious amounts of eggnog.

Hana offered to pay for it all, rich as she was, and begrudgingly gave the young, overworked (simultaneously overexcitable) clerk her autograph.

They loaded up the old hovercar and Angela maneuvered it back to the drop ship, where they opted not to unload the groceries and instead just leave them in the car for Jack and Winston to deal with when they returned to Watchpoint: Gibraltar.

On the way back, Hana dozed. The last thing she saw was the visor of her piloting mask sliding shut, tinted blue with the oncoming ocean. The last thing she heard was the gentle whir of the engines as the drop ship lifted from the ground, and then there was nothing.

She woke a few minutes before landing, having dreamt of falling through a snowy haze, vividly remembering the way the wind whipped against her face and howled in her ears. The drop ship touched down gently, and Hana eagerly peeled off her helm and gasped at the fresh air when her cockpit window opened.

Not yet, she reminded herself. Not yet. Almost there, Hana.

True as predicted, Jack and Winston were moving the hovercar out of the cargo hold. Hana took a step forward to help them unload the overflow of stuffed plastic bags, but her eyes caught sight of a jug of eggnog and a box of shitty gingerbread cookies. An idea struck her, in the dank shade of the cold hangar, and she shed her thousand-dollar winter coat, snagging the jug and cookies and dashing off towards the kitchen before anyone could question her.

She grabbed two small glasses and jotted down a note for Satya (*Hey, Satya! I'm currently testing a really bad idea and I'll probably be back later if I don't die. Also could you make curry for dinner? Thanks. - Hana*) before racing away again. With all she held in her arms, it was hard to move quickly without spilling, but she managed by sheer luck and skill.

The walk down to the brig was familiar. She'd walked it many times before, after all. The entrance code was engrained in her memory, as was the door of the cell. The grating sound of rusty gears turning was the same as it had been last she visited. The stairs lit up all the same, her footsteps echoing down the cement hallways. It was apparent that she was the only one down there.

She pressed her hand to the red keypad. It pinged and then groaned, the door opening slowly. Hana ducked and stepped inside, impatient, eager to test her theory.

"Hey, Widowmaker," she greeted, setting down her gifts on the floor and taking a seat in front of the closing door. "I brought you eggnog and gingerbread. It's Christmas Eve."

She watched curiously as the sniper's eyes narrowed slightly, though her face remained passive. "I do not like eggnog. Much too sweet."

Hana shrugged and poured herself a glass, taking a swig of the thick, sickly sweet drink. "More for me, then. I take it no cookies, either?"

Widowmaker scoffed. She looked so affronted in that moment that Hana was almost convinced the sniper felt something. But she knew her better than that.

"You hate Christmas," Hana stated. It was obvious to her, from how tense the sniper's lithe body was, how her expression seemed tight on her angular face.

Widowmaker did not respond. Hana pressed on.

"In your files, it said you killed your husband. Talon captured you. I can only assume they brainwashed you, what, with your permanently disinterested expression and blue skin— it contradicts old photos of Overwatch." She licked her lips, somewhat intimidated by the sharp glare the sniper was giving her. "They said you killed him in his sleep. The blood was fresh by morning, right? If the reports were correct."

Silence. Hana sighed.

"Look, I'm really not here to pester you about Gérard, or assault you with questions. I came here to make a deal."

That seemed to pique Widowmaker's interest, though she made no effort to acknowledge Hana's presence further. Encouraged, Hana continued, pouring eggnog into the second glass.

"You used to be a Talon operative. You have a lot of information that could be beneficial to Overwatch's cause. However, nothing we have tried so far has gotten you to spill. Asking, guilt-tripping, threatening... You know, stuff like that."

Hana pushed the glass towards the older woman. "I don't think words are the way to go about this. I don't think us asking is going to get us any insight, right?"

Widowmaker gave a minute nod, eyes narrowed in scrutiny. "I fail to see how—"

Hana sipped at her drink. "So, I'm going to bargain with you. What would you, if anything at all, like in return for information?"

The sniper pursed her lips, an expression of grief contorting her face for a brief second.
"...Freedom. I am tired of being manipulated."

Hana nodded. "Okay. Let's play a game, Widowmaker."

Widowmaker blinked, tensing. "What kind of game." It was not a question.

"A game of hypotheses," Hana replied. "For example, let's say I decide to let you out of this cell for a day. Would you tell me anything?"

Widowmaker frowned in consideration. "That would depend. I assume I would be under heavy watch."

Hana nodded.

"Then, hypothetically speaking, I would not."

"Okay, what if I let you out of this cell, got you some high quality food that isn't this disgusting egg drink or dollar-store cookies, a room, and convinced everyone to leave you alone?"

Widowmaker seemed very interested, now. "Oh? And wouldn't that be considered mutiny, *lapin*?"

Hana shrugged. "As long as it gets the job done, I'll accept whatever punishment they dish out. Anyways, answer the question. Would you tell me anything if I did all that?"

Widowmaker smirked, a cruel twist of her lips, golden eyes glittering. "I would sincerely consider it."

"Would you also consider joining Overwatch, then? We can supply you with more advanced tech than Talon could ever hope to offer, a bed that isn't made of metal and sheet, and good food three times a day."

Widowmaker's smirk fell. "I do not wish to... repeat history."

Hana shook her head. "You remember Doctor Ziegler? I'm pretty confident that she can help you out. I speak from experience." She fiddled with the rim of her glass. "Also, we can get you an outfit that isn't made of purple spandex."

Widowmaker glanced down at her attire, at the wide, open slit down her chest, and grimaced. "You make a tempting offer, *lapin*. I am inclined to accept."

Hana smirked, raising her glass in a toast. "I'll see what I can do, Spider."

The sniper plucked her glass from the ground, stared at it tepidly, and then clinked it with Hana's.

"We will see, *lapin*. We will see."

Chapter End Notes

Hey guys guess what I'm making this story a trilogy.

Anyways 2016 is ending and I'm honestly relieved because this year was shit. High

hopes for next year, yeah? Maybe Blizzard will reveal the rest of the LGBT characters?

See you next update, next year.

- Ace.

a life worth living

Chapter Notes

I'm happy to say this story is nothing but happiness and safety from here on out. It only took, what, 21 chapters?

CW: hana swears when she's emotional but don't we all

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Hana did a quick holiday stream, taking and completing numerous, obscenely menial challenges from her fans, tasting holiday food that had been sent in from across the globe, and broadcasting Lúcio's new album all the while. The stream didn't last too long, thankfully, as she lacked both the motivation and ideas to make it a few hours longer, but she put it out there for the world's sake nonetheless. It was her job, after all. She was just ripping off the bandaid of her double-sided career, if a euphemism were more appropriate for the situation.

Which it was. Her career was both double-sided and double-edged, and there was no way around it other than just *doing*, as quickly and painlessly as possible.

It's not that she hated streaming, but she pretty much hated it. It was boring, and it was repetitive. There was nothing to be gained from it anymore. She had all the money one could need for a lifetime or two. The job had become so mind-numbingly mundane, now a chore to be completed rather than a dream come true.

She'd thought fame would be her sanctuary, way back when, when she was young and caught in the trap of crushing loneliness, where her parents had abandoned her. Hana had long since realized that that was not the case at all, but the damage had been done all be same.

At least she'd been able to move on, she thought, yawning loudly and shaking her headphones off of her ears.

Hana set her headset down on her keyboard and powered off her monitors. Her eyes felt dry from lack of blinking all morning, she noted as she yawned again and stretched broadly, her back popping several times. Her sleeves slid down to her elbows as she raised her arms above her head, her feet kicking the underside of her desk when she stretched out her aching legs.

As it *was* a holiday, she wore a pink Christmas sweater decorated with snowflakes and miniaturized versions of her trademark rabbit motif. Everyone else in the large base also wore a sweater of some sort, as Hana had discovered upon asking was tradition.

Jesse wore one with the word 'BAMF' knitted in mustard yellow across the chest. Angela wore one with a menorah pattern stitched around the bust. Fareeha wore one in deep blue that had 'Ho Ho Homo' printed on it in white. Mei wore one with Disney's Elsa on the front.

All around, it was pretty entertaining going around and reading them all. Hana had done just so thanks to Athena's security feed and permission from the surprisingly festive AI. Athena was a friend of sorts, at this point. They watched shitty movies together when Hana kicked herself awake at night, and the AI had become the manager of Hana's chat box when she was steaming. Her streams had never been more organized and well-maintained.

"Hey, Athena," Hana called. "Where is everyone?"

"Everyone is in the commons room. They have been expecting you for quite some time," the AI responded. "Should I tell them you are on your way?"

Hana shrugged. "Go ahead. I need a distraction, anyways. I've been slouched here all morning."

Some food would also be beneficial, she supposed. The last thing she'd eaten had been a bag of salted black licorice from a fan in Norway, and the aftertaste was lingering in a rather unpleasant fashion.

The AI made a noise of consent and Hana knew her presence had gone to the commons. She decided to follow suit, seeing as she *had* given the go-ahead, and her stomach was growling for something more substantial.

The hallways of Watchpoint: Gibraltar were relatively festive as she ambled through them. A pine wreath here, a string of lights there, a menorah lit in Angela's office. It was a pleasant change of pace. Hana wondered, absentmindedly, if they did this every year, too. She had only joined that year, so she hadn't yet picked up on every trick and trade Overwatch had taken to.

Hana entered the common room to find more people than she'd initially expected. When Athena said everyone, Hana thought it had been a generalization, but everyone was indeed there. However, it was Aleksandra— donning a sleeveless pink turtleneck and a ridiculous, pink-sequined Santa hat— that noticed her first.

"Hana!" the Russian roared, standing and beckoning her over with a wave of her hand. "Come, drink!"

And Hana was more or less dragged over to the counter, where there were shot glasses and mugs alike lined in rows and a whole array of holiday treats that made her stomach growl.

"No one told me we were having a party," she commented, grabbing a steaming mug of hot chocolate and taking a sip, her other hand sifting through the cookie tray.

Fareeha, who was also at the counter— alongside Mei, Jesse, Genji, and Reinhardt— laughed. "We figured you'd come down eventually, once you finished your stream. It looks like we were right."

Hana rolled her eyes, shoving a sugar cookie in her mouth and relishing the taste. "You guys look ridiculous."

Suddenly, Lena was there, hooking an arm around Hana's shoulders. Her choral accelerator was absent from her chest.

"You came!" the Brit cheered. "I was debating comin' to get you myself, but it looks like there's no need. Now, we're all here!" She paused. "I mean, it's a shame Emily couldn't attend this year, but we've all been swamped with work and whatnot."

Hana blinked, taking another sip of her hot chocolate, peering at Lena curiously. "Who's Emily?" she asked, quirked a brow.

Lena flushed. "Um. My girlfriend?"

Hana promptly choked, hot chocolate spitting from her lips and nose. Fareeha thumped her several times on the back until she could glare pointedly at Lena without coughing.

"Your *what*?!"

Lena scratched the back of her neck awkwardly. "Emily— she's my girlfriend of four years, now. I coulda sworn I told you, too."

Hana took the napkin Mei offered and wiped the hot chocolate she'd spewed from the counter. "Obviously not," she bit out, though her voice lacked any true anger.

Lena winced, apparently having taken the facetious words to heart.

"That's not a problem, is it? I know how you feel about relationships—"

Hana turned on her heel and looked the rambling Brit dead in the eye. "*Lena*," she said. "I'm happy for you. Just surprised, is all. You don't need to change your relationship for my sake. Seriously, it's fine."

Lena worried her lip for a moment before nodding. "All right. I just... I don't want to hurt you again."

Hana smiled, thankful for the care, but finding it gratuitous in execution. "Romance doesn't really bother me anymore. I mean, it's not really my thing, but I've stopped trying to apply it to myself in every situation in which I face it."

She met Satya's gaze across the room. "I've come to realize that connecting with people is a pretty good feeling. I can see why most people take it to a sensual level. I don't understand, but it's understandable." She turned her gaze back to Lena, who stared at her in nothing short of wonder. "I'm happy for you, Lena, if that's where you're at. Honest."

Lena grinned and shook her head, shoulders sagging in relief. "Sometimes, I forget you're only nineteen," she said.

Hana's smile fell. "I grew up fast. I had to."

Luckily, Mei saved her from delving too deep into that train of thought, the scientist clapping her hands together and abruptly diverting their attention to her.

"Okay! That's too somber of a conversation for a Christmas-slash-Hanukkah party!" Mei chirped, a bright smile lighting up her face. Hana didn't miss the way Aleksandra's arm snaked around her waist. "Come on, let's talk about our presents."

Hana took that as an opening to escape, and slipped away before she could get dragged into anything obscene. She knew exactly where she was going, and Satya must have noticed, because the architect met her halfway. They tucked themselves away in a quieter corner on the second floor, a balcony of sorts that overlooked the common room. The voices downstairs were nothing but white noise.

"Hey," Hana said, leaning against the railing.

"Greetings," Satya replied, settling next to her, her own mug of hot chocolate cradled in her hands.

For a while, they stood together, chatting quietly, watching the controlled chaos downstairs unfold. They watched Reinhardt and Torbjörn fight over who made a better Santa. They watched Lena and Jesse compete on who could chug the most mugs of hot chocolate in one minute. They laughed when Jesse lost, and they laughed when he darted over to the sink to empty the contents of his stomach, with his boyfriend patting his back consolingly (but Genji was laughing, too).

They watched Reinhardt singlehandedly belt out the entirety of *All I Want for Christmas*, with Lúcio joining in halfway, and then Lena, and then almost everyone else was singing, too. And Hana laughed until she cried, because they all sounded absolutely horrible (except for Lúcio, of course).

They watched Angela dangle mistletoe above her head and cast a wink at Fareeha, receiving a laugh and a peck on the lips in return. They watched Ana pour a whole bottle of whiskey into the bowl filled with eggnog, and chuckled together when Fareeha took a sip of it, spitting it out immediately with an indignant cry of, "*Mother!*"

They watched Widowmaker, who had tried to tuck herself away into the corner, get dragged into the chaos by Aleksandra and Mei, Aleks who forced a mug into her hand while Mei placed a cookie into her limp hand and told her to relax.

Everyone was still cautious around the sniper, but they were making an effort to help her fit in. They trusted Hana when she told them the former Talon agent wasn't dangerous, that she was considering joining Overwatch of her own volition. Hana was glad.

Hana and Satya watched the others exchange personal gifts before the big unwrapping that was to happen later on, gifts passing between significant others with whispers and smiles and soft kisses in the dim light.

They watched, in silence, until their mugs were empty, but their hearts were full, Hana's head resting on Satya's shoulder.

"I made you something," Satya said quietly, then.

Hana grinned, removing her head from the architect's shoulder to look at her more directly. "Aw, you shouldn't have."

Satya gave a small smile and held out her hands, light dancing between her fingers as if she'd practiced this many times before, until the light solidified into what looked like holographic blueprints for her MEKA above a small hard drive.

"I went over your mech's design, and made many modifications to its original design. These are the finalized drafts of my research," the architect said. "The central capsule has more padding and is Kevlar reinforced. The main frame is lighter, but stronger. I also increased booster capacity and weapon accuracy by removing the unused storage space in the hull." Satya hesitated, swallowing, a nervous tick that Hana immediately noticed. "According to my calculations, these plans are faultless and could be implemented immediately. All they need is your approval, and Mr. Lindholm and I will get to work on them as soon as possible. However, it will probably take several weeks for us to fully rework these designs into your mech."

Hana took the hard drive, its surface smooth in her hand, and felt tears burn her eyes, her vision blurring. "Thanks," she croaked, fighting them back, but only barely. "This is... wow. Go ahead. Shit, I got you something, too, but it doesn't even compare to this."

Satya smiled, relief and warmth glimmering in her golden eyes. "Do not degrade yourself so quickly, Hana. You never know."

Hana fished the small box from her pocket and held it out. Satya opened it carefully, confusion evident when she held up the small pair of modules.

"They're mufflers, in a way," Hana explained. "Zenyatta helped me make them. They go on your headset. You mentioned before that you don't like loud noises, so this little device automatically

muffles any sound you hear that goes over a certain amount of decibels." She shoved her hands in her pockets, glancing down at her bare feet. "It's not much, but—"

A warm hand fell on her shoulder, Satya's gaze steady on hers. "Hana," the architect said, voice quavering slightly. "This means much to me. Thank you."

Appeased, Hana grinned, her emotion laid bare on her face. "I kind of want to hug you. Is that okay?" she asked, hushed, as if someone downstairs would overhear.

Satya's smile softened, her gaze dancing with light. "I have no qualms against that request."

Hana stepped forward, wrapping her arms around the taller woman's waist, stepping into that familiar warmth, nesting her chin on Satya's pale blue, sweater-clad shoulder. She felt arms loop around her own waist, shy, but unyielding.

As if on cue, slow music began playing on the floor below, soft notes wafting up to the balcony on which they stood. Hana didn't recognize the song, but it was a welcome change of pace from Overwatch's earlier 'caroling.'

"Merry Christmukkah, Satya," Hana murmured, emotion surging to the surface, hot in the back of her throat. "Thank you. Thanks for being there for me, even when you didn't know who I was. Thanks for being there when I woke up, for helping me find myself again when I got lost. Thanks for being there when I got back from Busan. Thanks for—" she sniffed heavily, tears welling in her eyes once more.

"Thanks for being alive today, even when you've gone through so, so much. I-I don't know where I'd be without you. I don't know how to tell you how much you mean to me—I don't know if I can even express it through words." She squeezed her eyes shut. "T-thanks for not giving up on me. It's... I-it hadn't been easy for me, t-these past few months." Her grip tightened. She clutched at Satya's sweater, as if the architect would disappear at any given moment.

"Hana—" Satya started, voice quivering with *something*, but Hana interrupted her before she could continue, tears dripping from her eyes. She was terrified, barely brave enough to go on. If she stopped now, she wouldn't be able to pick up where she left off.

"L-let me finish," she begged. "Please, Satya."

She felt Satya swallow and nod, the architect's own grip tightening. Hana pressed onwards, though fear gnawed at her, her confidence wavering, weak as it was.

"I-I don't... I'm not good at dealing with m-my emotions. I never have been. But I'm—I'm trying, have been f-for a while, for you." She sucked in a sharp breath, every fibre of her existence shaking with the confession. "I care about you a *fuck*-ton. I-I'm so damn scared of losing you. I didn't think I would be, I don't think I ever *wanted* to be, but I am, now. I-I'm scared when you're gone, and it's hard to say goodbye. When I'm with you, I feel safe. I-I feel like I should've been there from the start."

Hana laughed, a fragile, bitter thing. "I'm not ready for love, and I don't think I ever will be. Not again, not after Kim, but you mean *so fucking much* to me, now, and I'm *terrified*, Satya. I-I have all these feelings and I don't know what they are or what the *fuck* I should do with them."

She braced herself. Her chest felt like it was on fire— she was burning with a courage she hadn't ever seen from herself.

"...I-I think I love you, but it's not like how Angela loves Fareeha, or how Jesse loves Genji. I don't know what it is, a-and it *scares* me, and I need you to help me out, because I can't do this on

my own anymore. I've been searching for an answer that I won't find in anyone else."

She held her breath. Her heart skipped a beat or two. The only noise between them was the music and quiet chatter that came from the floor below. The hands on her back were shaking in time with her quavering, quivering soul.

"Before, you said we did not have to name it. That we did not have to be anything else," Satya said, and Hana heard the sheer rawness of her typically placid voice, heard the fear, but also the unwavering certainty. "That has not changed. Perhaps... Perhaps we don't have to know what it is. Perhaps it is better that we leave it be, as neither of us have ever known what it is like to express oneself properly.

"I do not know what I feel, either. All I know is that seeing you happy makes me feel at peace, and that when you are in pain it pains me, too. You search for an answer that I cannot give, and you are right. This is not romance, and I believe it is too far from anything we have ever known for us to give it a proper name."

The architect pulled away, and Hana noted the wet streaks trailing down her angular face, but the small smile that graced Satya's lips was brighter than anything Hana had ever seen.

"The truth is, as we both know, is that we *do not know*. We do not know, but we can work with that. There will be fear, in this unknowing, and this experimenting, as we try to understand that this doesn't need a name, that it is okay to just *feel* and *be* as we are. Fortunately, we have time, now. We have all the time we need."

Hana sniffed, wiping her eyes on her sleeve. "You'll wait for me, until then? I don't know how long I'll take. I understand it, now, but I can't readily accept the concept yet. All I've ever known from intimacy is pain. Convincing myself that this, whatever *this* is, won't be like that... it will be difficult."

Satya tucked her fallen bangs behind her ear, her fingers careful and precise. "I will wait as long as it takes. I have not yet persuaded myself, either, that I won't be a liability to you, that you are doing this because you genuinely care, but I can safely assume, now, that this patience goes both ways."

Hana smiled, the claws of fear around her heart easing. "Obviously. Either way, it's a relief, knowing that you know I'm not doing this because I don't trust you, and knowing that I have time to figure it out on my own."

Satya nodded. "Yes. On the contrary, I understand that it is because we trust each other implicitly that we do tread carefully as such, which is more than anything either of us can say we have before."

Hana laughed, and her chest felt light, her head clear. "Absolutely. Let's agree to just take our time with this."

The architect brushed away her own tears, looking at peace, and everything fell into place.

"Agreed. Now, shall we head back down and enjoy the festivities?"

Hana nodded, taking a moment to make sure she looked like she hadn't just been an emotional wreck, before casting Satya a private smile and starting down the gently sloping staircase.

Angela glanced up at her when she entered the commons room once more, and offered her a smile when Hana beelined towards the doctor's position on the couch. The blonde was settled next to Fareeha, the Egyptian's arm around her shoulders, dark lips pressed into her hair. She looked tired,

but tranquil.

Lena was tearing eagerly into a wrapped box at the base of the gigantic Christmas tree that Reinhardt had set up several days prior. Lúcio and Genji were laughing together at some wisecrack one or the other had spouted, whilst Jesse and Ana were attempting to convince Hanzo to taste the spiked eggnog. Torbjörn, Mei, and Winston were engrossed in conversation, with Aleksandra listening on quietly. Widowmaker was sitting on the couch, looking pained and reminiscent simultaneously. Jack was pouring himself a glass of vodka at the counter, and Bastion seemed to be conversing with Zenyatta animatedly, Ganymede asleep in his nest.

Angela shifted her position slightly and offered Hana an open arm. Hana leaned into the hug the doctor was offering, eager for the comfort, and sat down on the couch. She made herself comfortable next to the doctor, Fareeha sending her a warm grin across the couch. Satya sat down next to her, to her glee and relief.

"Happy holidays, *Liebling*," Angela whispered, Lena squawking in disbelief about her present somewhere in the background.

Hana felt Fareeha's hand on her shoulder, Satya's ever-present warmth at her side, felt the happiness and familiarity Overwatch had come to offer her, and cracked a smile, tucking into Angela's side.

"Happy holidays, Angela," she replied.

And she was home.

Chapter End Notes

So, that was basically the end. The next chapter is just going to be an epilogue of sorts.

Anyways, I just want to say writing this has been amazing. Y'all are amazing. Your support and commentary has been really, really good for my mental health as of late, and I'm glad what I've been learning and experimenting with my writing has shown through.

Expect to hear more from me soon in the next volume, *No Rest for the Weary*.

Thank you so much.

- Ace.

times like these

Chapter Notes

Title is taken from the song Times Like These by the Eden Project. I highly recommend it.

CW/TW: brief mentions of PTSD, panic attacks, because you thought you were done but i'm an ass. it's still fluffy though don't worry,,,, haha

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It had been a rough night, December 30th. She dreamt of Busan through a black curtain, of the burning sky, of the fire that rained like ash; the smell of rotting flesh that hung heavy in the smoke. She dreamt of an ocean, vast and red, filled to the brim with corpses, her name carved into every cadaver. She woke up screaming, her hands shaking, unable to breathe, eyes wild with furious terror.

Her fault, her fault, murderer—

She had almost convinced herself to go to Satya, but didn't. She had almost convinced herself to stop by the medical bay, but didn't. Her feet carried her to the training room instead, her brain moving on autopilot to prevent herself from dealing with the warped memories. Some things never changed.

She'd told Angela that her dreams were muted, that she only heard them more vividly rather than saw. Hana hated to admit that she'd been lying a little bit. Sometimes, and *only* sometimes, did the dreams come as blurs. She just didn't want the doctor to worry. It was only sometimes, anyways. She would live if it was as sporadic as had recently been.

And it *had* been sporadic. The nights filled with blurs, she spoke of to Satya because she had nothing to hide. The nights where everything was sharp and clear, she went back to *this*. She went back because it was safe territory, where she didn't have to risk anything, where she didn't have to be what she was for a few minutes. This was just easier, in the long run. She was healing, in the bigger picture, but what little she sacrificed in these minuscule moments of disassociation, she didn't have to heal. She didn't have to try so hard.

Vaguely, she knew it was unhealthy to continue on with these awful habits of hers, but it was only one night. She had been doing really well with therapy, lately. She deserved this much— cold turkey wasn't how she was going to cut herself off. She was too scarred for that, too weak. It had to be gradual, or she wouldn't change at all. She knew what jumping did, how badly it could end. She had the scars to prove it.

So, here she was.

Hana stood alone on the sparring mat. Her fists pounded into the training bot she'd programmed, the loud *thwap* of her knuckles hitting the red padding the only sound in the room, aside from her heavy breathing. Sweat rolled down her face and neck. Her arms ached, lungs burning, but she had to train— she wouldn't be good enough, otherwise. She'd already let two of her most important people almost die. That couldn't happen again, not if she could help it.

The door hissed open. Hana didn't stop, continuing on with her routine, landing a well-formed jab on the bot's flank. She did not know or care who entered, because as long as it wasn't Jack or Winston, it was none of her concern. She was out past curfew, as many people usually were despite Winston's weak attempts at reinforcement. Nobody would tattle.

The horrible sound of ripping medical tape deafened everything in the room for a heartbeat. She thought she heard someone call her name, but she was not at all sure that was the case. The sound grated at her ears.

Footsteps approached from behind. Hana didn't turn, landing several hits in quick succession, followed by a roundhouse kick.

Sweat dripped to the ground, falling like rain. Hana was hyperaware of every droplet. Tape ripped again, louder. Was it real or a memory? It could have very well been either, or both.

Her knuckles were bleeding through the gauze she'd buried them in. The papery substance had torn, shredding faintly around the reddened skin, the thick liquid dripping down her fingers. It always ended like this. Not matter where she went, what she did, the lengths she trudged in the name of healing, she always ended up in this same exact spot, the same exact way, doing the same exact thing. At least, now, she knew better. Probably.

Tape ripped. Her gaze flashed black, the red mat around her swirling and bobbing like water for a split second. Her eyes followed a bead of blood as it fell from her knuckle, her breath catching when the ocean below consumed it. And it hit her, then, that this was most definitely *not* real.

The world tilted abruptly. She felt carbon fiber tear through her chest, splitting her ribs like a knife through butter. The red, the sand, the feeling of knives in her lungs, the deep, burning holes where the bullets had bitten into her skin.

Satya's arm, laying on the ground.

"Hana," a voice said, a firm hand gripping her shoulder. "Come on. Let's get you to bed."

Hana resisted the gentle tug on her shoulder only briefly, entranced by the hypnotic pulsing of the waves, fully aware that she desperately needed sleep. She nodded numbly in response to the voice, trying in vain to make her eyes close, but unable to comprehend the basic demand.

"Hana," the voice repeated, and she recognized it then as Aleksandra. "You are not well."

She barked out a sharp, abrupt laugh, and it felt like glass in her throat. She wondered how haggard she looked.

"No, I'm not," she replied, her body shaking with exertion as the adrenaline faded. "I'm having a bit of a relapse, actually. If you could help, I need—" her voice strangled, her gaze focusing and refocusing on the twisting scenery around her. "I need—"

She pitched forward, but the older woman's strong arms caught her halfway down, and she was scooped up against a broad chest.

"I know," the Russian eased. "Just close your eyes, little rabbit. I will get you to the medical bay."

Aleksandra walked very slowly, with a careful patience Hana hadn't known the Russian possessed. She blinked confusedly, trying to make sense of what she saw in her limited, blurred vision. The hallways warped blearily, from Busan burning to Kashgar to the sixteenth strike against the Colossal Omnic. It was becoming less and less clear the longer they walked. That was good.

She glanced down at her hands— her hands were ruined. She'd done that on purpose. She thought that maybe if she ruined them enough, the bloodstains would fade. It seemed stupid, now that her post-dream hysteria was starting to fade. Already, the halls had faded back to Watchpoint: Gibraltar's familiar metal.

She wouldn't tell Aleksandra she was fine. She wouldn't tell the Russian that she could walk on her own, because she didn't trust her legs to take her far. She wouldn't tell her that she didn't need help, because she did.

"Thanks," she said instead. "Sorry about all this. I try not to sleep much because it helps, but it has its ways of getting back at me."

Aleksandra quirked a brow that Hana felt more than saw.

"Then take a sleeping pill— simple."

Hana laughed, a weak huff, and let her eyes slip shut. "The problem isn't falling asleep," she said. "It's waking up. My dreams are... violent. Every time I wake up, I'm volatile. I'm a hazard, because it's *then* that I control myself the least." She couldn't help but laugh a little, stretching out her sore fingers as much as she could. "It sucks."

Aleksandra understood. Hana saw her piece it together in her head, pausing for a moment as she came to the realization, before she carried on as if nothing happened.

The door to the medical bay opened automatically. The lights were off, but blinked on as soon as they entered. Aleksandra set her down on a medical bed carefully, lingering for a few seconds unsurely before speaking.

"Who do you want me to get?" she asked quietly.

Hana stared down at her hands. She hadn't thought about relapsing, not since Lena woke up and was proved to be in tip-top shape. It was shocking, on her part, to see herself like this again, in this same position, but it was not unexpected.

Well, as she'd said— two steps forward, one step back.

"Fareeha," she replied quietly. "She'll understand."

The Russian nodded and left the room. As soon as she was gone, Hana turned her attention to the gauze sticking to her skin, and began attempting to peel it off with her teeth. Her fingers were fucked to the point of numbness and her hands throbbed. She'd really done a number this time. Of course she had. All or nothing, after all.

The door opened. She looked up and met Fareeha's placating, yet stern gaze, and gave a small wave.

"What happened to the system?" the Egyptian queried. "The one where if you dreamed about a certain thing, you would see a certain person?"

Hana shrugged. "I couldn't think straight. The thought never occurred to me," and then, "Fareeha, I'm not safe when I'm alone. I'm not quite to the point of stability yet. I need to speed this process up, somehow."

Fareeha looked unsettled, taking a seat at the foot of the bed. "I understand you want to get better, Hana, but this isn't something you can force."

Hana shook her head, frustration pushing past the exhaustion. "You don't understand. When I wake up, *that's* when I make the worst decisions. *That's* when I'm at my lowest point. When I wake up, and I'm alone, without restraint or a steady presence, I'm dangerous."

"Dangerous to whom?"

Hana slumped against the headboard. "Myself," she admitted. "That's why I try not to sleep. It's not the dreams that scare me—I mean, they do, too, but it's more what I do when I wake up." She glared down at her throbbing hands. "This time, it just happened to be more destructive than usual. Sorry."

Fareeha began to gently peel the rest of the reddened gauze from her hands. "Does this happen every time?" She asked. "Are you always this... unpredictable?"

Hana grimaced, holding still whilst the older woman continued with her ministrations. "As far back as I can remember, I think. I wouldn't be surprised if it used to be worse."

Fareeha sighed. "I know I'm going to sound like a broken record, but why didn't you tell anyone?"

Hana huffed, her fingers twitching. "Because I know how to fix it, and I felt like it was asking too much of you guys. I've done enough already."

The Egyptian quirked a brow. "Try me."

Hana juggled her options in her head for a long minute, a frown twisting her lips, before ultimately deciding to concede.

"I mean, there are several options, really, but they're all so... *childish* that actually going through with them really doesn't appeal on a moral level with me. To make a long story short, I can't wake up alone."

Fareeha plucked a nano-shot from the wall, cradling it in her hands for a moment. "That's all?"

Hana's frown deepened. "It's not that simple. You know that."

The needle pierced her arm with a certain precision that told Hana that Fareeha had definitely been training with Angela.

"That is true," Fareeha said. "I don't understand why it's a complicated thing for you, or why you can't just ask. I know much of how you feel, but I do not know everything. The reality is, I'm not going to help you on this one, Hana."

Hana was appalled, perhaps even a little affronted. It must have shown on her face, because the Egyptian was quick to explain.

"Hana, you've been taking great strides in healing, but you're fighting a personal battle, now. This is something you have to solve on your own, without influence. This is an issue that has been a firewall preventing most of your progress." Fareeha's dark eyes shone in the darkness. "You know this. Nobody can make this decision for you; to seek help, or to let your instincts rule your logic. I'm not going to influence that decision."

"This is my new year's resolution for you— make that choice. Take that chance, Hana. I'm proud of how far you've come, and I'll still be proud of you decide this is how far you want to go."

Hana watched the skin on her knuckles slowly stitch itself together. She understood. She knew

that this was the biggest roadblock yet on the path to recovery— the issue of *asking* for help, rather than taking and receiving and giving back only weak reassurances. It was one thing to accept what was offer, it was another to present herself in her weakness and let herself be accepted.

"I'll think about it," she promised, because she could do that much without lying. "I really want to get better, Fareeha. Why does it have to be so hard?"

The Egyptian pulled a wet cloth from a stray medical tray and began wiping the blood from her hands. Although, Hana noted, a gentle smile had graced Fareeha's lips, and she glanced upwards, eyes bright with pride.

"You'll be okay. Trust yourself, for a change."

Hana wiggled her fingers, staring at the bruised skin in wonder. "I'll make no promises on that one," she said, smiling tentatively. "But that's what new year's resolutions are for, right?"

Fareeha grinned and helped her to her feet, ruffling her hair affectionately. "Good night, Hana. I'm heading back to bed— try to get some sleep, if you can."

Hana snorted, grinning nonetheless. "Are you kidding? The young never sleep."

Fareeha laughed. "All right, I give up. I trust your judgement."

And then she was gone. Hana followed her out of the medical bay, back towards the rooms of all Overwatch agents, and paused at the intersection there.

If she went left, it would lead to Satya's room. If she went right, it would lead to hers.

Fareeha had said that the decision was hers and hers alone. One last bump in the road. She was so, so close, now, closer than she'd ever been. Would she stop here? Would she stop fighting just at the cusp of victory?

Hana laughed at that, the knots in her chest easing from their coils. What kind of question was that?

She veered left, her chest light, her arms tired and in pain, her legs burning with exertion. She reached the door quickly, a smile curving her lips, and knocked on the door with an open palm. Satya answered after a few moments, still looking pristine despite the unprecedented awakening.

Hana explained the situation quickly, ripping off the metaphorical bandaid that came with confessions of any sort. Satya's eyes cleared the more she understood, and when Hana finally managed to squeeze the question from her mouth, the architect already had a response.

"I would not leave you alone if I had the choice, Hana. Of course you are welcome to stay here."

When Hana looked down, she still saw an ocean, but it was all smooth sailing from here.

23:58. It was almost time.

Hana glanced around the common room, balancing her glass of champagne in her hand. Fareeha

and Angela were laughing together, each with a glass of wine. Reinhardt, Ana, Jack, and Torbjörn were filling each other's glasses with beer. Genji and Hanzo were talking quietly off to the side. Jesse lingered next to his boyfriend but politely conversed with Mei and Aleksandra instead of eavesdropping.

Zenyatta sat near Widowmaker on the couch, no words exchanging between them, but there was no tension in the silence. Bastion was chirping a cheerful tune, Lúcio leaning against it, swirling a colorful margarita in his grasp, talking aimlessly with Winston.

Hana stood near Satya and Lena, watching the large clock that Athena had turned the large screen into, watching every second pass. Lena had pulled up a FaceTime of her girlfriend on a small communicator, and introduced the redhead to everyone who hadn't had a chance to meet her.

"A chaotic finish to an even more chaotic year," Satya mused with her tall glass of white wine.

Hana huffed. "You can say that again. It's been a right mess."

Satya smirked. "But the outcome has been overall beneficial."

Hana grinned good-naturedly. "Smartass."

Satya chuckled daintily, and opened her mouth to respond before Athena's voice chorused throughout the room.

"Twenty seconds."

Hana turned to face the large clock, Lena turning the communicator so that Emily could also see. The room quieted.

"Fifteen seconds."

Hana sagged into Satya's side, warmth spreading from her chest to her fingertips, a small, sincere smile on her face. "We did it, Satya," she sighed. "We found a home."

Satya's eyes glimmered with tears that she quietly brushed away.

"Yes, we did. "

"Ten."

She watched as Lena pressed her lips to the screen of the communicator, fighting back tears, but grinning. "Miss you, Emily. Love you more than life, you know."

Emily smiled through the screen. It had already been an hour since England celebrated the new year, but she opted to stay up and celebrate it with her girlfriend.

"Love you too, Lena. Happy new year."

"Nine."

She watched as Reinhardt wrapped his great arms around Jack and Torbjörn's shoulders, eyes gleaming with joy. Torbjörn's laugh filled the room.

"Eight."

She watched Jesse tug Genji away from Hanzo and press a soft kiss against his scarred lips, watched them curl into a smile in response.

"Seven."

She watched Ana move across the room to Fareeha, arms open in a gesture of peace, hesitation bright in her eyes. She watched Fareeha tug the old woman in for a hug, laughing and crying at the same time. They'd forgiven each other, after all, it seemed.

"Six."

She watched Zenyatta turn to Widowmaker, his soft voice humming something unintelligible, and the sniper's shoulder's slumped and she murmured something back.

"Five."

She watched Aleksandra sweep Mei off of her feet, holding her like a princess and laughing at the flush that swept across the smaller woman's face as she yelled, "This year, I will lift 513!"

"Four."

She watched Lúcio skate over to the statue-like Hanzo, a smile on his face as he nudged the older man in the side and whisper something in his ear, prompting the archer to freeze, and then smile as turned his gaze to Genji and Jesse to watch over them with his wise, kind eyes.

"Three."

She watched Bastion chatter away to Ganymede, who chirped back happily and nuzzled against the old unit's shoulder.

"Two."

She watched Fareeha cup Angela's cheek, and expression of pure adoration on her face as she tenderly leaned in to claim the doctor's lips. The two of them moved as one—they really were perfect for each other.

"One."

She thought back to who she used to be, a bitter, thorny soul caged in layers of ice and steel, with skin made of candyfloss and starlight.

She thought of who she was now, a small flame with an open heart, scarred and shy but not yet broken, fighting for a better life she knew awaited.

"Happy new year," Hana said, her glass clashing against Satya's and Lena's, a dribble of champagne spilling over the edge, and Overwatch roared in time.

She knocked back her drink, and it felt like fire in her throat. There was laughter, drunken kisses, and many intoxicating drinks shared between agents, but Hana?

Hana sank into the couch, exhaustion heavy on her shoulders. She'd been fighting for so long—each year fed into the next. Would this year be any different?

Her eyes burned, her chest burned, and her mouth burned. *How many refills?* she wondered. How many times had she emptied her glass?

The couch dipped beside her. Someone plucked the empty glass from her hand, and then warm fingers threaded through her own, squeezing gently.

Hana smiled, eyelids heavy, and squeezed back. It was her insensitive hand, but she could feel every point where their skin touched, and it burned along with everything else.

"Hey, Satya."

A thumb brushed over the bruises marring her knuckles.

"Your hands."

Hana sighed, glancing down at their intertwined hands. One, dark, unmarred. The other, pale, the fingers and knuckles stained purple and yellow.

"Yeah. I woke up in the wrong state of mind. I'm fine, now. Really."

Satya hummed, appeased. "Very well."

Hana sat there with her in silence for a few minutes before speaking.

"You know..." she said, quiet amongst the noise of the celebrations. "I think we'll be okay."

She saw Satya smile from the corner of her eye. "You make a strong argument," the architect jested. "I am inclined to agree."

Hana laughed softly. "You're ridiculous, Satya Vaswani. Absolutely ridiculous."

Satya squeezed her hand again. "And you are incorrigible, Hana Song."

Hana managed a small laugh before her head fell on the architect's shoulder. She was impossibly tired. Her eyes were barely open, and she was no longer fighting the heavy exhaustion.

"You should sleep," Satya breathed, private affection lacing her dulcet tone.

"Yeah," Hana mumbled, fighting back a yawn. "I think I will." Her eyelids fell shut, the darkness curling around her like a warm blanket, and then she thought no more.

Chapter End Notes

This the end, everyone! Of part one, at least, and boy was it a ride. Thank you all so, so much for sticking with me the entire time.

See you soon.

- Ace.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!